FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk April 23, 2017 Mid edition No 761

ELECTION

Farage rules himself OUT

After months of hints he would run, Ukip's frontman shies from the fight

HEALTH

Warning over fentanyl dangers

Already one teenager in county a victim of the drug

TRAVEL

Holloway on Lower Thames Crossing

One week on, Gravesham MP reflects on route decision

SPORT

Focus on our marathon heroes

We look at some of those in today's big race

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Blockbuster democracy shows no sign of ending

DAVID Dimbleby was interviewed this week, in the light of the snap election announcement, who described this as the third and final part of a democratic trilogy.

He spoke of the opening part being the 2015 victory for David Cameron, followed by last year's 2016 EU referendum and now this - an election which seems, inevitably, to lead us back to an era of dominant Conservative rule.

Certainly it has been the most remarkable of political eras and it's up there with the original Star Wars movies as delivering non-stop, unexpected entertainment - with ample highs and lows depending on your political persuasion.

Of course, while many will see this as an election which Theresa May will romp to victory in, it does suggest the opposition could soon be about to swing back into contention.

Granted, that's not going to happen for Labour under Jeremy Corbyn. He may have plenty of loyal, vocal, supporters, but in Kent at least, he's about as attractive to the floating voter as a case of herpes. Realistically, he'll surely be out in seven weeks' time.

But history does suggest we have a tolerance for one party in power for only so long. At some point - and it will be once we have left the EU and the implications of that, good or bad, become clear - our desire for political change will once again rise to the surface. Ukip has demonstrated this - most notably here in Kent in recent years. Such is the see-saw of our political landscape.

The real lesson of the June 8 election will be how the opposition parties reassemble once the results are known and plot their futures. Failure to do so effectively could leave another Ukip - from left, right or centre - to emerge as 2022's surprise package.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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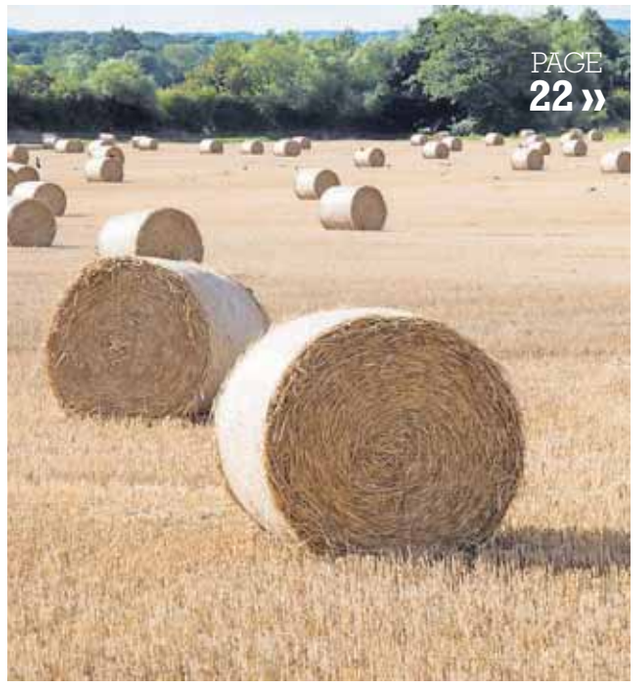

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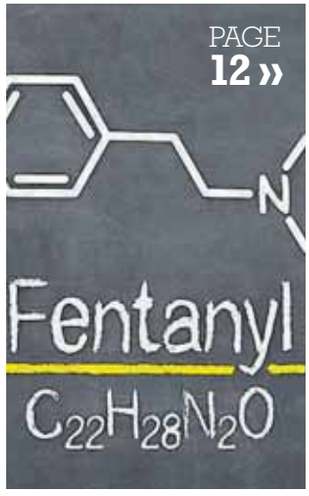

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Ukip leader quits blaming party 'conflict and chaos'

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

INFIGHTING: Ukip colleagues lock horns - Len Laws, left, Mary Lawes, right

THE leader of the Ukip group on Shepway District Council has quit his role citing "disloyalty, conflict and chaos" in the local party.

Len Laws, who represents the Walland and Denge Marsh ward on the local authority, also said he was resigning from the party with immediate effect.

He will now serve as an independent councillor.

But he has not quit quietly - taking a huge swipe at the behaviour of his colleagues on the council.

Among them Kent County Council candidate in the May 4 election Mary Lawes who only found out about his decision to quit when contacted by KoS.

Cllr Laws said: "The conduct of some members of the Ukip councillors, their disloyalty and the conflict and chaos within Ukip locally has made my position as leader untenable. I was elected leader of the group in July 2016 - three of the seven-strong group made it clear they would not work with me including Mary Lawes, the former leader. I contacted the Ukip regional organisers for assistance and Mary Lawes was told by them to work with me or leave. She did neither, instead acting unilaterally in statements and council business.

"The Ukip Folkestone branch was recommended to have a steering committee put in place but this was never implemented. In one ten month period the branch had one meeting — the rules state at least six per year.

"Councillors Mary Lawes, Susie Govett and Frank McKenna have acted as mavericks rather than members of a group and don't have the courage to stand as the far left politicians I believe they really are.

"I still believe in the aims and ambitions which I thought the Ukip stood for but the party has changed so much I believe it has left me. Therefore I shall sit as an independent councillor at Shepway and represent the residents as best I can."

Mary Lawes, however, slammed the statement saying there were "a lot of untruths".

She told us: "I wasn't aware of this at all. I think it's rather sad that if he had a problem with us he did not choose to discuss it with us.

"I am so not a far left politician - absolutely far from it."

The news comes just weeks before the May 4 county council elections. More election coverage inside.

Calls for accelerated road-building to ensure no Brexit traffic chaos

A KENT MP is calling for a Brexit bill to speed up the building of roads in the county after unveiling a queue-busting plan to ensure Dover and the Channel ports are ready for leaving the EU.

Charlie Elphicke's 50-page report, developed with ports, shipping and haulage businesses, sets out a detailed blueprint to ensure order at the border and has been supported by Xavier Bertrand, president of the Calais and Dunkirk regional government.

The Dover and Deal MP has previously warned the 14-hour queues seen at the port last summer would be "a tea party" compared to what will happen if a solid plan is not in place post-Brexit.

Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs have also suggested there could regularly be tailbacks all the way to Essex.

In a five-point plan, Mr Elphicke calls on the government to continue to invest in resilient roads to the ports.

With the Lower Thames Crossing announced last week, the MP is also calling for a quick upgrade of the M2/A2, dualled all the way to the ports, and the planned M20 lorry park to be delivered on time.

Mr Elphicke said: "This plan highlights the kind of choice people will soon have to make.

"Gridlock at Dover will mean gridlock for the UK economy. Yet with proper planning we can not only be ready on day one – we can make Brexit a real success. That's what this plan is about.

"My priority is for a stronger UK and to make sure that Brexit is a success for Dover, Deal and our villages."

The MP and Mr Bertrand worked closely to ensure the Calais 'jungle' was dismantled and have teamed up again for this post-Brexit plan. He said: "We must work together with Dover to make the same choices for investments in new digital tools to boost fluidity, fast lanes, as well as increased monitoring and the fight against terrorism."

Question mark hangs over future of Debenhams stores

STAFF at branches of Debenhams in the county have been left anxious after the new boss of the department store chain said 10 stores were under review with possible closure if they fail to turn a profit.

Although the names of the stores have not been revealed, there are branches in Ashford, Canterbury, Rochester, Folkestone, Westwood Cross, Gravesend and Orpington.

It comes after chief executive Sergio Bucher, who took over in October, revealed a 6.4 per cent drop in pre-tax profits.

It is also to close 11 warehouses countrywide. Mr Bucher said that while none of its stores are unprofitable, those under review have been identified as possibly becoming loss-making in the future.

Brand bites off another slice of Bake Off spin-off show

COMEDIAN Jo Brand will join the next series of The Great British Bake Off as she brings back her spin-off programme, The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice.

Formerly a BBC Two production, the new run will move to Channel 4 along with the main baking show when it returns for its eighth series.

Brand, who grew up in Kent, living in St Mary's Platt and Benenden, will welcome a fresh host of celebrity guests to discuss the show's latest episodes, as well as each contestant to leave the tent as the competition progresses.

Long-standing TV baker Paul Hollywood, who lives near Canterbury, will stay on as judge, while Prue Leith replaces Mary Berry and Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding take over as presenters.

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seven days

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County town set for flag-waving civic parade

THE 36 Engineer Regiment will march through the centre of Maidstone, with bayonets fixed, next month to celebrate their right as honorary freemen of the borough.

It will form part of the local council's civic and freedom parade which will be led by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas and will incorporate the inauguration of the new town mayor, Malcolm Greer.

The parade will leave County Hall at around 11am before setting off along Week Street, down the High Street and to the Town Hall. It will trigger the closure of a number of roads until around 12.30pm.

Union Jack flags will be handed out to the public lining the route.

Campaigners warn rail plans could force small county stations to close

By Tom Pyman
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CAMPAIGNERS are warning small stations in Kent could close in future as a second petition has been launched against proposals in the government's consultation on the future of the south eastern rail franchise.

More than 20,000 people have already signed a pledge urging the Department for Transport not to go ahead with plans to make services from Dartford terminate at Cannon Street only, rather than several different termini in the capital.

In its response the DfT said it is "not proposing to cut specific services" as it asked whether passengers would support reducing the choice of London termini served from Kent stations to provide a more regular timetable and reliable service.

Now a separate petition is gathering steam in the west of the county, as passengers contest proposed changes to services between Tonbridge and Ashford.

ROW: Passengers are unhappy

Under the plans, some trains on that line would no longer stop at stations like Pluckley, Headcorn, Staplehurst, Marden, and Paddock Wood, in a bid to speed up journey times.

A spokesperson for the Save Kent Trains campaign said: "We believe this would be disastrous for the communities, towns and villages along this line and could potentially lead to the closure of the stations altogether."

The DfT has given no indication such drastic action is on the cards, however.

In its consultation, it said: "We are also exploring various options for reducing the journey time on the existing mainline route between Hastings and Charing Cross via Tonbridge.

"For instance, reducing calls at less well used stations could deliver an hourly fast service. Other services would still stop at these stations.

"This approach could also be adopted on other routes, such as Tonbridge to Ashford.

"Although we would be delivering faster journeys, we recognise that this has the potential to inconvenience passengers that currently use those intermediate stations."

RETURN: Countess of Wessex

Sophie visits 'gold standard' hospital suite

THE Countess of Wessex was in the county on Wednesday to visit a maternity bereavement suite at a local hospital.

Sophie, who was raised in Brenchley and trained as a secretary at West Kent College, has long been involved with charities relating to children and families and visited the suite at the Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham after her original visit in November was cancelled due to bad weather.

The project has been funded by stillbirth charity Abigail's Footsteps.

The scheme has also benefitted from significant donations from charity supporters from across Kent and support from Medway NHS Foundation Trust. David Ward, co-founder of Abigail's Footsteps said: "This is our first purpose built bereavement suite where parents can spend precious time with their stillborn baby away from the cries of new-borns.

"It is now the template for maternity units across the country and we are already working with other trusts to help them to achieve the same high standards."

The CQC described the suite as "the gold standard in the provision of care for parents and families who experience a stillbirth".

Blaze rips through old furniture store

THOUSANDS of pounds worth of damage was caused on Wednesday night after a fire ripped through a former furniture shop in the centre of Faversham.

Firefighters were called to Preston Street at around 9pm to tackle the fire amid fears it could spread to nearby properties.

Five flats were evacuated as crews took two and a half hours to extinguish the flames.

The shop premises was empty at the time and no-one is believed to have been injured.

Residents were able to return to their properties in the early hours of Thursday morning, once the scene had been made safe.

The fire had spread to the first floor and roof of the shop, causing extensive damage.

Emergency teams eventually left the scene at around 8am on Thursday.

An investigation into what sparked the fire is now under way, with fire crews flying a drone above the scene to survey the damage.

Garden city: Planners green light for homes

ALMOST 100 new affordable homes at Ebbsfleet Garden City have been given the green light by planners.

A total of 233 homes were approved on two sites on Wednesday, with 97 of them being classed as affordable.

Redrow's latest plans will see further expansion at Ebbsfleet Green where it is building up to 950 homes, along with a village centre, park, sports pitches, a hotel and pub and a primary school.

It was given approval by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation's planning committee for 191 new properties, 55 of which will be shared ownership or affordable rent.

In a separate scheme at Castle Hill, Eastern Quarry, housing association Clarion was given permission to build 42, two to four bedroom homes, all of which will be shared ownership or affordable rent.

Paul Spooner, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation interim chief executive, said: ''The garden city is proving popular with those wanting to get their first step on the property ladder with its wide range of quality new housing.''

Blow over pilot plan for seasonal workers

CALLS for a pilot seasonal workers scheme to help Kent farmers combat a shortage of temporary labour have been rejected by the government.

Environment secretary Andrea Leadsom, who grew up in the county, told the House of Commons there was not enough evidence to justify the introduction of such a scheme.

It comes just days after she visited fruit farms in the Kent constituencies of MPs Helen Whately and Helen Grant. Mrs Whately, who is chair of the all-party parliamentary group for fruit and vegetable farmers, orchestrated a Westminster Hall debate just before Christmas, where she warned colleagues a shortage of such workers is putting Kent farms at risk of going out of business.

The minister said: ''The migration advisory committee and a consultation with businesses later this year will seek to determine exactly what the need is. The government are committed to making a huge success of the food and farming sector as we leave the EU.''

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Plan to excavate 300-year-old ship which sank off our coast

By Tom Pyman
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A SHIP which sank on the Goodwin Sands almost 300 years ago will be partially excavated by archaeologists this summer.

Dutch East Indiaman, the Rooswijk, was on its way to the East Indies with valuable cargo on board when the ship sank off the Kent coast in January 1740.

The wreck is threatened by natural conditions such as currents and shifting sands and an exploratory study of the wreck last year has made the need for excavation even more urgent.

From July to October this year, an international team based in Ramsgate will map the wreck and secure archaeological material for future generations.

This project is being run by The Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency in partnership with Historic England.

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) wreck is of enormous value to archaeologists as it will help them better understand this period of seafaring history.

There are a total of 250 Dutch VOC shipwrecks, of which only a third have been located with none researched or excavated on this scale.

The decision to research and partially excavate the wreck by Dutch minister Jet Bussemaker marks a significant moment in the management of Dutch heritage overseas.

She said: "Increasingly we realise that these traces of our maritime past, of which many rest invisible on the sea floor, are an important part of our identity. Shipwrecks are time capsules that provide a unique view into the past and tell us a story.

"The two centuries of VOC are part of that story and our collective memory, including everything we are still proud of, but also from which we are ashamed.

"The archaeological information we can gain from this wreck is a unique tangible and objective source and extremely valuable to describe this period in history."

Heritage minister and Chatham and Aylesford MP Tracey Crouch added: "This exciting joint excavation project will safeguard important material for future generations, develop underwater research and support the new Ramsgate Heritage Action Zone initiative."

HISTORY: A drawing of a similar ship. Pic: Collection of the Fries Scheepvaartmuseum

'Absolutely appalling domestic abuse case'

A THUG who punched and strangled his partner at their home in Cliftonville, leaving her fearing that he would kill her, has been sentenced to 14 years imprisonment.

Christian Hinkley attacked the woman on several occasions - one time stamping and kicking her in the face. Kris Venkatasami for CPS South East said: ''This was an absolutely appalling case of domestic abuse.''

Tourism push on track for railway lines

TOURISM champion Visit Kent has launched a major promotion of the county's heritage railways.

Posters and leaflets will go on display at mainline railway station promoting the likes of East Kent Railway, Romney Hythe and Dymchuch, Spa Valley , Sittingbourne and Kemsley and the Kent and East Sussex Railway.

£150k funding boost

A CAMPAIGN to reduce the number of suicides in the county and diminish the stigma of mental health has received £150,000 of new funding as it marks its first anniversary.

Release the Pressure, co-ordinated by Kent County Council, received the cash to provide additional support and train mental health professionals.

City chaos fear as three level crossings to stay shut all day

MOTORISTS heading into Canterbury face major disruption in June after three major level crossings are all to be closed on the same day.

Kent County Council has given approval for the closure of rail crossings at St Dunstan's Street, St Stephen's Road and Sturry Hill all day on Sunday, June 4.

It will allow Network Rail, which handles rail infrastructure, to carry out essential repair works.

KCC says it has allowed for all three to shut on the same day due to "exceptional reasons" and that it would not normally allow all three to shut at the same time.

A spokesman for KCC said: "We apologise for any inconvenience caused by the longer diversionary routes in operation on June 4, but access is required by Network Rail at these crossings on this date for urgent work to be undertaken.

"It is also preferable to have all the engineering work required at these crossings to be undertaken on one day when the railway line is shut between Ashford International and Ramsgate via Canterbury West, rather than to spread this essential maintenance work over several days requiring separate line closures."

Thousands discover first primary school places

THOUSANDS of school children across Kent found out what primary school they will be starting this September with some 97 per cent getting one of their preferred choices.

In Kent, 16,855 children will receive a school of their preference with 15,429 being offered their first preference school, nearly a two per cent improvement on 2016's first preference figures.

Only 2.56 per cent of applicants were unable to be offered a school of their preference, a reduction of 162 from 2016 to 444.

Of those 444 who were not offered one of their preferred schools, nearly half failed to make use of all available preferences, limiting Kent County Council's ability to offer them a preferred school.

In Medway, just over 89 per cent of children have secured a place at their first preference school - up two per cent - just over six per cent at their second preference, and just under 1.5 per cent at their third.

The school admissions process for Medway involves the council processing applications for 3,375 Medway resident pupils and 130 out of area pupils.

Parents received emails from 4pm on Tuesday and letters to confirm during the week.

Applications for places opened in September last year and parents had until January 16 to submit their applications to the council, naming schools in order of preference. Authorities then allocate children to relevant schools.

Duo to swim in Thames

A MOTHER and daughter from Swanley have won a national competition to swim a mile in the Thames at The Henley Mile, an open water swimming event to be held in Oxfordshire on July 9.

Jacquie and Megan Yeoman will now spend the next three months in training.

Horses escape on A2

THERE were long delays on the A2 near Gravesend on Thursday afternoon after two horses escaped onto the hard shoulder of the London-bound carriageway.

Traffic was stopped in both directions between the Dartford Heath and Darenth Interchange for two hours to recover them.

Shed crooks on the rise

POLICE are holding a series of crime prevention events in Gravesend to coincide with an annual rise in burglaries from sheds.

Allotment holders and gardeners are being urged to attend the events. The next is between 3-4pm at the Gatwick Road allotment.

Death crash appeal

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after a motorcyclist in his 60s was killed following a smash with a white Volkswagon Tiguan on the B2075 Romney Road towards New Romney on Wednesday.

Officers want to talk to occupants of a pick-up truck who may have seen the crash.

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Beheaded cats spark alert

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

WARNING: Pet owners urged to take extra care after cats found killed

FEARS are growing among animal welfare campaigners that the so-called 'M25 cat killer' is striking in Kent after decapitated bodies were found in Chatham and Herne Bay.

In one of the cases, two fox cubs - both with heads cut off - were also discovered by an animal group which has been investigating the killings.

They say the grisly finds match some of previous killings.

The South Norwood Animal Rescue and Liberty (Snarl) group has issued a number of warnings recently following reported killings in Croydon and areas surrounding the M25 motorway in the south east.

The rescue centre believes more than 250 cats have died at the mystery killer's hand since 2014 and incidents now appears to be spreading to parts of Kent and Medway.

A spokesperson for the group said last Sunday: "We have been notified of two suspicious incidents, one at the Herne Bay Memorial tennis courts, where a cat had been reported beheaded and one in Chatham where the body of a decapitated cat had been found, also with her tail removed.

"When we attended the tennis court, we found two dead fox cubs, one of whom had been beheaded.

"Our thanks to the local council who gave us permission to damage the padlock on the gate if necessary.

"Thankfully we found an access that didn't require us to cut the lock off.

"The body of the decapitated fox cub bore a signature injury for the M25 animal killer so this has been linked to the investigation.

"We also examined the body of the cat from Chatham and sadly confirm that she is a victim of the M25 animal killer. The cat has been identified and our thoughts are with her owner this evening."

Snarl warned residents last month that a man in his 30s has been knocking on doors, claiming to be collecting money for the investigation into the killer.

However, the charity insists it has never raised funds door to door and never will, and urged those who come into contact with the man to notify the police.

A live music gig was also held in Bromley last month to raise money and awareness for Snarl.

Ex-MP defects to Lib Dems

FORMER Medway Labour MP Bob Marshall-Andrews has defected to the Liberal Democrats after branding his former party a "political basket case".

The barrister, who served during 1997 and 2010, denounced the "abject failure of the Labour leadership" over the EU referendum campaign, saying the Lib Dems have "grasped the politican challenges of the 21st century".

A regular thorn in the side of former PM Tony Blair, he developed a reputation as a rebel, and quits Labour after 50 years.

Italian eatery goes on sale

ITALIAN restaurant Vecera in Canterbury has gone on the market.

The restaurant, rated one of the best in the city on TripAdvisor, is up for sale with an asking price of £625,000 for the freehold.

Agent James Hughes of Christie and Co said: "The profitable business has been growing year on year and has received great reviews. It gives a new owner the scope to grow the business further."

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Farage shies away from standing in shock move

He insisted he would contest the Kent seat he lost in 2015, but now the former Ukip leader has performed a U-turn

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

AFTER months of posturing and insisting he would "have to" fight once again to become an MP in Thanet, Nigel Farage surprised the county this week by announcing he would not be standing in Theresa May's snap general election.

Less than two years after voters last took to the polls to elect members to parliament in Kent and Medway, here we are again, as the prime minister looks to increase her majority to give her a stronger mandate and more negotiating power with the European Union over Brexit.

In truth, it's hard to predict anything other than another rampant victory on June 8 for the Conservatives, who occupy all 17 of the parliamentary seats in the county.

Though the prospect of Mr Farage returning to the scene where he has lost twice before in a bid to finally win a seat in Westminster was always going to get people talking.

The drama has only been enhanced by an expenses scandal exposed earlier this year, in which the Conservative Party was found to have "understated" spending during campaigning for South Thanet in 2015.

The Tory victor, Craig Mackinlay, has also been quizzed by police over the controversy, which resulted in his party being slapped with a record fine of £70,000.

While various forces around the country have sent files to the Crown Prosecution Service regarding allegations of breaching spending limits, Kent Police is not one of them and is understood to still be investigating the allegations.

Mr Mackinlay, who has long protested his innocence, told KoS this week he would be fiercely defending his seat and rejected suggestions the scandal, or the prospect of a returning Mr Farage, would in any way affect those who voted for him last time, and was confident of another victory.

"There was a high water mark for Ukip pre-Brexit and I was as strong a Brexiteer during that time," he said.

DECISION: Nigel Farage now says he won't stand as an MP in this year's elections. All pictures: ADY KERRY

WINNER: Craig Mackinlay will defend the seat he won back in 2015

"I can't see why anyone who didn't vote for Nigel in 2015 would [had he decided to stand again] now.

"[The spending] is an investigation, I have not been charged with anything and I maintain that I have not done anything wrong."

Mr Mackinlay had the backing of his neighbouring Conservative colleague, Sir Roger Gale, who told KoS the issue had not been raised when he spoke to residents over the weekend.

"It's absolutely not Craig's problem," the Thanet North MP said.

"He and his agent submitted their expenses in good faith, completely legitimately.

"I was out campaigning in Cliftonville over Easter for our candidates in the KCC elections and it has not been mentioned once on the doorstep, it's a non-issue.

"Ukip need to be looking over their shoulder because there will be people going after Farage's expenses too."

Mr Farage has also been accused of overspending on the Kent seat, but has also denied any wrongdoing.

Sir Roger said Ukip had let the local electorate down over the Manston Airport saga and expected that to be reflected in upcoming votes.

The airport closed in 2014 and the site is currently owned by bosses behind the Stone Hill Park project - which aims to deliver 2,500 homes and leisure facilities, while insisting the area's history and heritage will be respected and maintained.

Ukip won control of its first ever council in Thanet in 2015 on, many believe, an election pledge to re-open the airport, though council leader Chris Wells has subsequently denied making any such promise.

Work is currently ongoing to obtain a development consent order for the site, with RiverOak Strategic Partners expected to submit an application to the government's planning inspectorate later this year.

Ukip leader Paul Nuttall hinted last week on a visit to Margate that the airport could still have a future, telling us "anything is possible", but Sir Roger believes Thanet residents have grown tired of the party's promises and, despite being one of the oldest MPs in the country at 73, vowed to continue fighting for Manston.

"I think Ukip will pay a very heavy price in both the county council and general elections; they're going to be on a bumpy road," the MP said.

"They have clearly broken their promise over Manston and as far as I'm concerned, it's unfinished business.

"There's no way I'm going to put my feet up until planes are flying again.

"If you think about it, Farage is a loser. He's got what they call 'previous'. He's lost seven times and I couldn't see the public voting for him.

"Farage and Wells promised they would re-open Manston and they lied, they have not done it.

"They didn't say 'we will open it if RiverOak come forward with the money', they said they'd re-open the airport and they have failed."

Announcing his decision not to stand this week, Mr Farage said a victory in the snap election would have been a "vindication" for him, but he had come to the conclusion his position as an MEP gave him a better chance to influence Brexit.

"If I compare the platform I have in Strasbourg to being a backbench MP, there is frankly no comparison," he said.

"The Brexit negotiations will take place in Brussels and the European Parliament will not only have a large impact on them, but ultimately will have the right of veto any deal at the end of the two-year process.

"I believe I can use my profile in European politics to put real pressure on MEPs to vote for a sensible deal with the UK."

MPs across Kent admitted they were completely stunned by Mrs May's announcement on Tuesday, with Sittingbourne and Sheppey's Gordon Henderson not even aware it had been announced when contacted for comment by KoS.

Gareth Johnson said he expected his constituency to once again paint the political picture nationally.

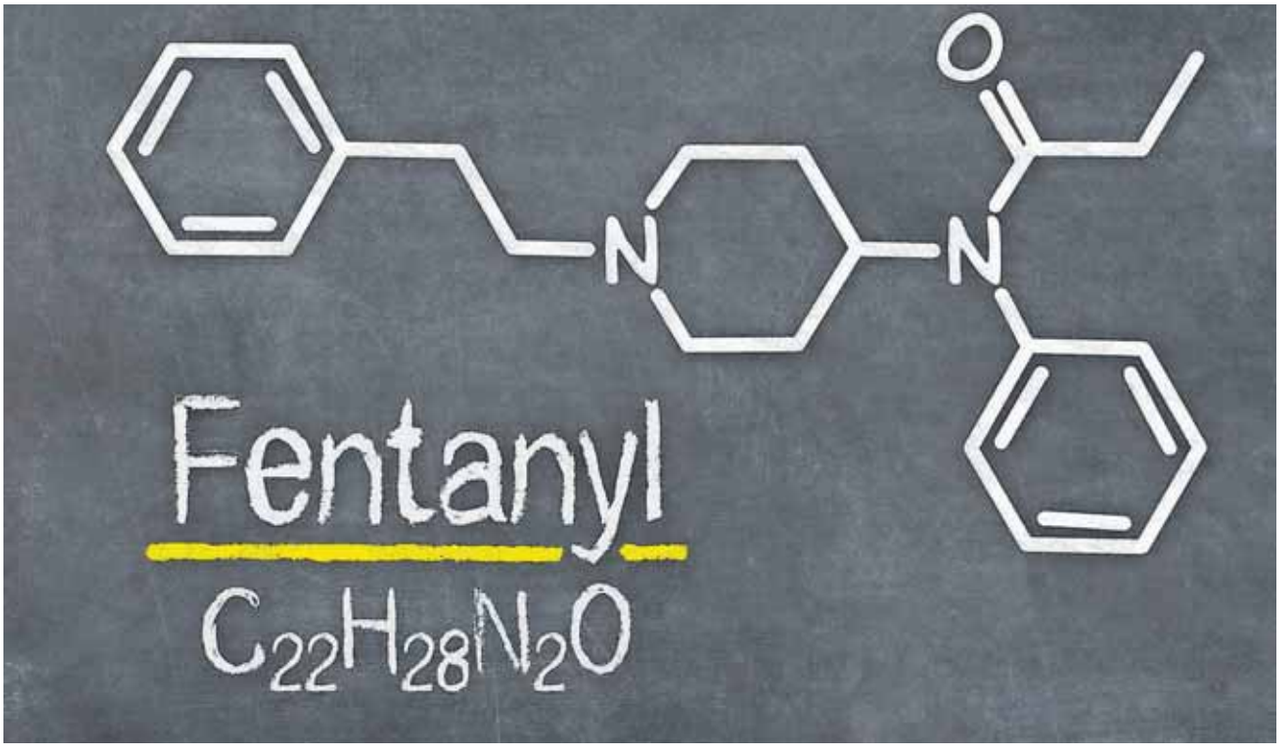
"Dartford is Britain's longest lasting bellwether seat, having returned an MP from the governing party at each election longer than anywhere else," the MP said.

"This means that if Labour win in Dartford on June 8, Jeremy Corbyn will be our prime minister and running our country. The thought of that makes me shudder.

"We cannot allow Jeremy Corbyn to spoil the work that Theresa May has started."

One dead and a 'near miss'; the rising fears over drug fentanyl

Chris Murphy looks at arrival on these shores of a drug more potent that heroin which has prompted Kent Police to issue a clear warning



A WARNING has been issued about a worrying rise in the use of a dangerous drug, described by one county cop as "100 times more potent than heroin".

It has already been responsible for the death of one teenager in Kent and another "near miss".

Fentanyl is traditionally used as a prescription drug for chronic pain relief. But it has started appearing in other drugs as a so-called cutting agent - in other words mixed in with illegal drugs such as cocaine or heroin by dealers to bulk up supplies.

The National Crime Agency says there have been recent spikes in the use of the lethal narcotic being mixed in too high a dose with heroin.

Inspector Garry Brimson, the substance misuse and licensing officer for Kent Police, said: "Although we are not aware of any current significant issues with Fentanyl use in Kent at this time, within the last 18 months we have sadly had one death and one near miss."

He added: "People should be aware that this synthetic drug can be up to 100 times more potent than heroin and so any use as a cutting agent or adulterant could prove fatal.

"We work closely with other police forces and analyse all drugs found during our proactive operations to monitor the situation and safeguard the public. If anyone has concerns about their drug use we would advise them to seek medical attention and also speak to a treatment provider."

Robert Fraser, from Deal, was just 18 when he was offered fentanyl by someone selling him cannabis. Unaware of what it was, it killed him in November. An inquest into his death will be held soon. He had just finished a motor mechanics course at Canterbury College and his death has devastated friends and family.

His mother Michelle said the availability of drugs now was so much wider due to the internet and mobile phones.

She said: "We were not as aware of drugs when we were younger, but we need to be aware now for our children's sake."

It is claimed he was given the dose to try and "see what it does" his mother said.

She added: "You do not expect to lose your children. My son should be getting an apprenticeship, girlfriend, getting married and having a family of his own. He won't be able to do that now."

Tony Saggers, head of drugs threat and intelligence at the NCA, said the extremely potent class A synthetic drug is upwards of 100 times more potent than street heroin.

So far, its use in the UK has been quite small, but reports say it caused 47,000 deaths in North America in 2014.

The NCA said it is now working closely with the police to assess the full extent of the risk it poses to heroin addicts in particular.

Mr Saggers said: "We are aware there has been an increase in drug deaths this year in the UK, primarily linked to heroin use.

"Although this spike has been in the Humber, Yorkshire and North East of England region, it is too early to say to what extent fentanyl was a contributing factor.

"Fentanyl can be problematic to identify in post-mortem toxicology, but we have noticed an increase in the drug in forensic testing of street heroin.

"Heroin users need to be aware that the amount of fentanyl in a £10 bag of heroin need only be 1/50th of the total quantity, about two milligrams, to be a lethal dose."

The courts have already been given a green light to hand out harsher sentenced to dealers cutting heroin with fentanyl as it is now regarded as an 'aggravating' feature.

Kent County Council said it commissions drug and alcohol care from two companies.

One of them is Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners Trust, or RAPT, which has not yet launched its county service. RAPT boss Mike Trace said: "It is synthetic so is faster acting and much more dangerous than other opiates."

■ **If you have information about the illegal supply of drugs, contact the police on 101 or call Crimestoppers anonymously**

JUST WHAT IS FENTANYL?

FENTANYL can be used as prescription drug to treat chronic pain. The US-based National Institute on Drug Abuse said its street names include Apache, China Girl, China White, Dance Fever, Friend, Goodfella, Jackpot, Murder 8, TNT, and Tango and Cash.

Medically it can be an injection, patch, or even a lozinge.

It is now being illegally produced in labs in Mexico and China, as a powder. soaked into blotting paper which is placed on the tongue, pills and nasal spray.

The opioid acts like heroin or morphine.

The institute said: ''It works by binding to the body's opioid receptors, which are found in areas of the brain that control pain and emotions.

''When opioid drugs bind to these receptors, they can drive up dopamine levels in the brain's reward areas, producing a state of euphoria and relaxation. Fentanyl's effects resemble those of heroin and include euphoria, drowsiness, nausea, confusion, constipation, sedation, tolerance, addiction, respiratory depression and arrest, unconsciousness, coma, and death.''

It was first created by Belgian Paul Janssen who launched pharmaceutical company, Janssen Pharmaceutica, in 1960. It was an intravenous anaesthetic with the brand name, Sublimaze.

PRINCE DEATH LINKED

The death a year ago this week of the singer Prince was as a consequence of him accidentally overdosing on fentanyl.

Although it is thought the performer, who was found dead at his Paisley Park complex in Minneapolis on April 21, was not aware it was in the drugs he was taking to treat long term pain through his exhaustive dance routines during his long career.

As the inquiry into his death continues, a search of his home found a number of pills he was using - some in prescription bottle under the name of a close associate. Some were counterfeit and tests revealed they contained fentanyl.

RIP: Prince at Paddock Wood's Hop Farm Festival in 2011

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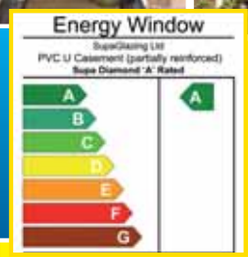

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Could general election benefit Labour Party in KCC vote?

Jeremy Corbyn is facing mission impossible on June 8, and overthrowing the Conservatives on Kent County Council also looks an equally big ask for Labour here. What can we expect next month from a party seemingly at its lowest ebb?

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

THERESA May's surprise decision to call a general election this week could have a positive knock-on effect on next month's Kent County Council vote, a senior Labour figure has said.

The prime minister stunned the nation when she announced on Tuesday her intention to hold a public vote on June 8, in a bid to strengthen her mandate and negotiating power post-Brexit.

The subsequent fallout has, perhaps understably, massively overshadowed the upcoming county council elections, but separating national and local politics could be a boost for prospective Labour councillors pounding the streets in an effort to win crucial votes over the next fortnight.

Nationally, under the divisive leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, the party's stock is seemingly at its lowest since the days of Michael Foot.

Mr Corbyn is being almost universally regarded as "unelectable", and Mrs May was surely looking at his struggles and anticipating an opportunity to strengthen her majority when she made her decision this week.

There is already fallout from a Labour perspective, with a host of current party MPs declaring they will not seek re-election in seven weeks' time, seemingly preferring to quit than face what they expect to be humiliation.

The latest analysis of opinion polls put the Conservatives on 43 per cent, a 17-point lead over Labour's 26 per cent.

Given that Labour secured 99 fewer seats than the Tories in 2015, when the polls were much closer, the scale of the challenge facing Mr Corbyn is clear.

And while public perception of parties nationally will always inevitably have an impact on how people vote when they take to the polls, at whatever level of politics, the prospect of a general election just around the corner in which voters can make those strong political statements could help unblur those lines.

In Kent, Labour needs to send a strong message after falling behind Ukip as the main party of opposition to the Conservatives last time out in 2013.

As questions over the purpose of the purple party post-Brexit grow louder, it has an opportunity to make up some of the ground it lost four years ago, though the Liberal Democrats - which gained 1,000 new members within an hour of Mrs May's announcement - will also be targeting that opposition role.

Roger Truelove is the deputy leader of the Labour group on KCC and told KoS he was hopeful residents would recognise the quality of the local candidate as a priority when casting their vote.

"I was not truly surprised because the government were going to find the next couple of years very difficult with a slim majority so I think she was always going to go and try and strengthen that," he said.

"But it's disturbingly close to the county council elections and I'm not too sure what impact this week's announcement will have on those.

"I would like to think people will appreciate county council elections are important for education, health, the environment and think 'I ought to go and vote'.

"But there's always a danger that national politics gets into local elections and people want to make a statement.

"Now they can do that on June 8 so hopefully they will separate the two.

"I'm not sure it affects our campaigning too much, but we may have to make it clear we're calling about the local elections.

"Other than that, as far as we are concerned we've got a programme and that doesn't change."

Cllr Truelove has been campaigning in recent weeks to defend his Swale Central seat and drum up support for other candidates in the borough.

Shadow chancellor John McDonnell was on the campaign trail in a visit to Gravesend earlier this month in which he pledged investment in communications and energy, echoing the sentiments of Mr Corbyn who suggested a £30bn package would be available for the south east if he won the keys to Number 10 when he visited Ramsgate at the end of last year.

Cllr Truelove said he appreciated the visit of Mr McDonnell, which drew strong crowds in the north of the county; he was cavassing for himself in Swale at the time.

He admits a lot of his potential votes will be borne out of local familiarity with residents who have elected him before, rather than his status as a Labour candidate.

However, with the thorny issue of Britain's membership with the European Union now resolved, Cllr Truelove says it has opened the

SUPPORT: Labour supporters turned out in force when shadow chancellor John McDonnell visited Gravesend earlier this month

door for a better, friendlier discussion about a range of other local issues.

"Recently I've found people more pleasant than in recent years," he said.

"They don't keep saying 'all you politicians are rubbish'.

"There's definitely been a more friendly response and a greater willingness to talk about more than just Europe which is refreshing.

"It used to be really one-dimensional politics."

Cllr Truelove told us earlier in the year his party were campaigning to win, but had to be realistic about its prospects.

He said it was targeting coastal areas, with the Tories having a seemingly-immovable stranglehold on some seats in the west of the county.

But as for the best of the rest, there is a growing cross-party consensus that Ukip will not repeat its surprising feat of 2013 having achieved its major aim of Brexit, and will see its

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

representation heavily slashed on May 4.

Conservative MP for South Thanet Craig Mackinlay told us earlier in the month he wouldn't be surprised if there was "an absolute wipeout" of Ukip seats on the council.

Liberal Democrat MEP for the south east Catherine Bearder admitted such as a scenario "would give me a lot of pleasure" and sensed an opportunity for her party to stake a claim in its place.

Labour currently has 12 councillors representing the party at County Hall, compared to Ukip's 14 and seven for the Lib Dems.

Cllr Truelove agreed that Ukip's seats were up for grabs and was confident Labour would end the election with a strong representation on KCC.

"We are trying to win, of course we are, but what Kent needs is a good opposition and I think people will get that with Labour," he said.

"If we are not that party of opposition it will be the Lib Dems because Ukip has completely fallen by the wayside.

"But really I can't see the Lib Dems picking more than one or two seats across the county."

Labour was the first of the major parties to release its manifesto ahead of the county council elections, at the heart of which were six pledges.

These were to "fight for fair funding so that services don't continue to be cut or privatised, scrutinise services in the fight against inequality, demand infrastructure investment for housing and transport and scrutinise services for greater efficiency".

Councillors also vowed to give the Kent community more control over its economy and public services and work with local communities and co-operatives to develop more localised answers to the needs of Kent people.

It also promises to work to halt the drive towards academy trusts and free schools, though the government's work to transform education has accelerated significantly even as recently as this month, when a whole wave of new free schools were announced.

AMBITION: Labour is struggling under Jeremy Corbyn (top right) but Roger Truelove (bottom right) is confident it can still win County Hall seats

These were the Barton Court Academy Trust (BCAT) Free School, Bearsted Academy, CSAT Northern Gateway, Maidstone Primary Academy, Medway Academy, Primary First Trust in Gravesham, Rochester Riverside Church of England Primary School, Stone Lodge Academy in Dartford, The Beeches, The Maritime Academy and Turner Academy in Folkestone.

It says it will continue to oppose attempts to create more selective schools, and a Labour MP recently said in the House of Commons that Kent was an example of why the grammar system does not work for all.

Leader of the Labour group on KCC, Gordon Cowan, will also be defending his Dover Town seat in next month's election.

"We believe that austerity has gone too far, there is too much privatisation taking control of our local services and there needs to be more local solutions to our complex issues," he said.

"Labour councillors love our county of Kent. However we believe there is too much inequality hidden beneath the surface of prosperity.

"We want to see greater fairness at work, in schools and in the health service.

"We believe that the county is heading for chaos unless there is a lot more investment in our infrastructure.

"Our roads are overcrowded and poorly maintained."

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CONTROVERSY: Lower Thames Crossing and an artist's impression of how the Gravesham tunnel will look

FIGHT: Gravesham MP Adam Holloway

Campaigners continue fight as dust settles on crossing decision

The fallout to last week's decision to locate the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend continues as campaigners accuse Highways England of manipulating a consultation report and constituency MP Adam Holloway tells **Tom Pyman** he is "not bothered" if he loses his seat in the general election

A WEEK on from what now looks only the government's second biggest announcement of the month, opposition campaigners and residents are still licking their wounds from the seismic decision to locate the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend.

While the move was largely celebrated in Dartford, and by a number of businesses and politicians in surrounding areas growing frustrated by uncertainty, it remained a controversial and catastrophic announcement for others in the north of the county.

And as Theresa May fired the starting gun on a snap election, one of her Tory colleagues admitted this week he was "not bothered" by suggestions locals could rebel over the row and force him to lose his seat, insisting he felt fighting the crossing verdict was a bigger priority for him than ensuring he is still an MP after June 8.

Adam Holloway told KoS he will still stand for re-election in Gravesham over the summer but regardless of the result, he would continue to pile pressure on the government over what he believes is a generation-defining mistake.

"Visually I am very aware of how awful this will be for people who are along the route, but I am also aware of what an absolute disaster this is for the people of Dartford," he said.

"When we first had meetings about this in 2006 it was to fix the M25 at Dartford, it never occurred to us that it would come through our patch.

"It morphs into this thing to do with economic development and of course there is an argument it improves the economy in Kent and Essex.

"But the reality is this is going to take less than 15 per cent of traffic from Dartford and it's a problem that is going to go on for another couple of generations.

"My duty is towards the people here and this is a disaster for every user of the M25; it's terrible.

"I'm in this weird position where the only people who think this is a bad idea are people that live here.

"So they say 'that's only because you're affected', but if I thought the Lower Thames Crossing was the right thing to do I would man up and tell those people 's**t happens, we have to get on with it'.

"But it is simply not the right thing to do."

Instead, Mr Holloway would have liked to have seen a longer tunnel taking traffic from before the A2 to after the A13 in Essex for long-range national traffic.

"They reckon 40 per cent of traffic is long-range and 60 per cent is local, so if you can get most of that long-range traffic using the two new tunnels you've got 40 per cent more local capacity in the current tunnels," he said.

"The people of Dartford have been very badly served by their political leaders, who should have been on their knees begging for a longer tunnel option.

"They have simply got it the wrong way around, they should have fixed the problem at Dartford and then think about other options if they wanted to.

"My focus now is keeping on at [transport secretary] Chris Grayling because this is not a transport project, it's an economic one, and we are going to look at legal action and mitigation."

> **"I don't know if it will affect how people vote and in truth I'm not bothered. I know what I've done over the last 10 years and this crossing issue is much more important than whether they vote for me, to be honest"**
>
> **Adam Holloway,** Gravesham MP

Gravesham councillor Bryan Sweetland, who quit his cabinet post on Kent County Council over the row, told KoS last week a fighting fund of £150,000 is set aside for a potential judicial review, but they would need to take legal advice as to whether such a move would be possible or practical "with a slim chance of winning".

Mr Holloway also threw his weight behind campaign group, the Lower Thames Crossing Association (LTCA), which this week sent a letter to Mr Grayling, who was ironically late for a meeting with this newspaper last Wednesday due to heavy traffic in Dartford.

The campaigners claim the consultation analysis report had been manipulated to skew the results to favour Highways England's preferred option to build the crossing east of Gravesend, known as Option C.

It is said the opinions of 946 Shorne residents opposed to the crossing have been "lumped together" and counted as a single organisation because they used similar wording in their consultation responses.

Bob Lane, chairman of LTCA, says that this means that the opinions of 946 Shorne residents bitterly opposed to the scheme have been discounted, and given the same weight as just one individual or organisation in favour of the scheme.

"Ipsos MORI [the market research company which carried out the report] and Highways England have discounted the opinions of over 13,000 people across north Kent and south Essex who opposed the scheme, and lumped them together into just 14 'organisations'," he said.

"It is scandalous that the opinions of over 13,000 people whose lives will be devastated by the crossing can be cancelled out by just 14 individuals in favour of the scheme.

"In March last year, I presented a petition with 3,678 signatures to the KCC environment and transport cabinet committee, but the report says that it had only 11 signatures."

The letter also draws attention to another petition which the campaigners say received 2,778 signatures but which is reported to have obtained only 37 signatures, and a petition in Thurrock which obtained over 31,000 signatures which they say has been completely missed out from the report.

"All in all, there were over 38,000 signatures against the proposals, and yet the report has only included 188 signatures," Mr Lane added.

"How can the government be expected to make an informed decision when the information it is given is so badly flawed?"

In response, a Highways England spokesperson said: "The announcement of the preferred route follows an exhaustive review of options and extensive analysis of more than 47,000 responses to our 2016 public consultation.

"Of the 47,034 responses received, 13,284 were identified as being associated with an organised campaign, which are identically worded responses.

"We considered each response very carefully and carried out further assessment of the options before making our recommendation to government.

"Overall there was strong and widespread support for a new crossing at Option C, though we acknowledge that there was strong, mainly localised opposition.

"A new crossing at Option C offers the improved journeys, new connections, network reliability and economic benefits that only a new, alternative river crossing, away from Dartford, can provide."

Quizzed on whether his seat was under threat in June's election because of the crossing verdict, Mr Holloway said: "I don't know and in truth I'm not bothered.

"I know what I've done over the last 10 years and this issue is much more important than whether they vote for me, to be honest."

• **Share your views and join the debate. Email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.**

Runners put best foot forward to fundraise at London Marathon

Tens of thousands of people will flock to the capital today to raise money for charities by completing the 26.2 mile event. We take a look at just a handful of the many Kent runners who will be taking part

By Emily King
Emily.King@archant.co.uk

IT IS one of the nation's best-loved sporting events - a celebration of dedication and good old fashioned blood sweat and tears. The London Marathon is here again.

Around 40,000 runners are set to line-up for the 26.2 mile slog around London's streets, with hundreds heading up from Kent to either take part or soak up the spectacle.

And while for many it is the big day after months or even years of training, charities will be looking to cash in too with hundreds of thousands of pounds raised for good causes.

We take a look at just a handful of the Kent runners taking part in Sunday's big race - and wish everyone taking part a successful run and a good time.

Peter Atkinson

Rochester dad-of-two, Peter Atkinson, will be running on behalf of cancer charity CLIC Sargent after they

supported him through his five-year-old's leukaemia treatment.

Mr Atkinson, 33, who is also a maths teacher at Northfleet School for Girls, is "determined to give something back to the charity" now his daughter, Beth, is in remission.

He said: "I wanted to repay some of the support CLIC Sargent have given us. They gave us stability while everything else was unstable, particularly in those first few darkest weeks of diagnosis.

"I want to help make sure they can help as many other families as possible."

Mr Atkinson, pictured with Beth, left, would like to raise £3,300.

■ **To sponsor his marathon effort justgiving.com/fundraising/peteatkinson83**

Ellenor runners

North Kent hospice Ellenor, has nine supporters running this year.

All supporters are people who have had a family member cared for by the hospice. They are Sue Savin, Wayne Du Plessis, Faye Stapleton, Amy Savill, Tina Butler, Megan Prigmore, Kevin Denny, Maciej Kopec and Sagi Burton.

Ms Savin (pictured above), from Erith, is tackling the 26-mile challenge, and raising money in memory of her mother, Linda Brooks.

She said: "My mum devastatingly passed away from cancer in June 2015 and spent the final days of her life at Ellenor in Gravesend.

"The staff there were absolutely wonderful and took such great care of Mum. Even when she was no longer able to comprehend what was going on, they were gentle, tender and loving.

"I won't lie, it's been very challenging - the toughest thing I've ever done physically as well as mentally, but I'm determined to cross that finish line. The time and energy I've put into this is still nothing compared with the extraordinary job that the Ellenor staff do on a daily basis."

Originally Ms Savin was hoping to raise £1,500 but has surpassed her target, and has now raised over £2,200.

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■ **To donate to ellenor visit justgiving.com/fundraising/Sue-Savin3**

Emma Garcia

University of Kent PhD student, Emma Garcia (pictured below), is hoping to raise £3,000 for brain injury charity Headway, in memory of her friend Amy Haskew.

Ms Haskew died when her bicycle careerd off a cliff and she hit her head.

The friends met when they were studying for masters in forensic psychology in Canterbury.

Now the 26-year-old plans to run for the charity after they supported Ms Haskew's family.

Ms Garcia said: "I needed to find a charity Liz, Amy's mum, would think was appropriate.

"At the funeral Amy's parents had a donations box for Headway. Once I saw the box I didn't need to ask her anymore."

Cerys Beeby, senior community fundraiser for Headway, said: "It's brilliant that Emma has raised so much money.

"It's people like her who allow us to help so many brain injury survivors and their families.

"We'll be there on the day cheering on Emma and the rest of the Headway runners to make it across the finish line."

■ **To donate visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/EmmaGarcia**

Ben Rogers

Ben Rogers, from West Malling, will have completed his 365th marathon within a year when he crosses the London finish line.

Mr Rogers, pictured right, set himself the challenge with hopes of raising £5,000 for Pilgrims Hospices after his stepfather, Doug Chaffer, was cared for by the team there. He also wants to raise a further £5,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

He said: "Pilgrims provided all sorts of support to make my stepfather's life more comfortable. he attended therapy sessions at the hospice and organised activities that kept him active and interested in life.

"He didn't go into the hospice in the final days, as he wanted to be at home with Mum. The Pilgrims nurses that came to care for him were outstanding.

"I thought I'd do a marathon but realised that anyone can run a marathon, so though I'd try something a little bit longer term to really get the fundraising going. I came across a guy in Ireland doing 100 back to back marathons, and that got me thinking about 365 marathons for the year.

"As long as I have run 9,563 miles by the time I cross the finish, I will have achieved my goal."

Robert Grew, Pilgrims event fundraiser. said: "This is an amazing challenge, Ben has been keeping in touch throughout the year with updates on his progress."

Mr Rogers' fundraising efforts have so far raised £3,500.

■ **To donate visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/365MarathonMan**

LAM Action runners

Bandhana Jakhu, and Sarah Colvin, are running the marathon to fundraise for LAM Action, a charity which supports people wth a type of incurable lung disease.

They chose the charity to show support to their colleague Colin Robey's wife, Louise, from West Malling, who has the rare condition, lymphangioleiomyomatosis - better known as LAM.

Only around seven women in every million are affected by the disease, and about 250 women in the UK are thought to have the condition at present.

LAM progressively destroys lung tissue and leads to breathing problems, and in some cases benign kidney tumours.

Ms Kakhu, and Ms Colvin both work in the tax team at the London Stock Exchange, and are hoping to raise £4,000.

Ms Jakhu said: "After learning about how extremely small a charity LAM is, I felt raising funds for it could make a real impact.

"I'm feeling quite scared about taking part, but I'm just going with the aim of surviving, I don't have to get a specific time."

Ms Colvin said: "I have two children, aged 11 and seven, who have little faith in my athletic ability as I'm known as the lazy one in my house - but I hope to prove them wrong."

Ms Robey, a mum-of-two, was diagnosed with LAM in 2014, and has herself raised over £30,000 for LAM Action by holding a fun run in 2015.

She said: "I am so grateful to Benny and Sarah for running, and it is hard to find the words to thank them enough.

"LAM Action is a very small charity, and all funds raised for it make a hige difference to the support that can be provided."

■ **To donate visit justgiving.com/fundraising/Sarahand-Benny**

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Water shortage fear allayed as amateurs predict our weather

Water companies say a dry winter should not mean any shortages as forecasters have mixed views on our summer

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

WATER chiefs say they are ready to cope with forecasts of a dry summer amid fears it could usher in hosepipe bans and problems for farmers.

A drier than normal winter has left many to be concerned that water supplies could dry up if the summer continues to see relatively little rain.

But the farmers' union and water companies say the situation is not raising any alarms just yet.

Paul Hammett is national water resource specialist at the National Farmers' Union (NFU).

He explained: "There are currently no environmental or water supply issues as a result of dry weather but the Environment Agency is carefully monitoring the situation and will take action to manage any environmental impacts.

"The NFU are also monitoring the forecasts of dry weather and working closely with organisations such as the Environment Agency, Defra and the Met Office. We will have a much clearer picture in the next few weeks as crops develop and grow."

For farmers hoping to benefit from bumper crops, this time of year is crucial to the growing cycle. But a lack of rain over the winter has already had an impact on water levels.

A spokesman for Southern Water explained: "The winter of 2016/17 was drier than average, particularly in the months leading up to Christmas. This means there are lower water levels across our regional water sources.

"Rainfall during January, February and March has helped, with groundwater levels up as a result. This is important as 70 per cent of the water we supply comes from underground sources.

"River levels also increased, allowing us to pump some of this water into our key reservoir at Bewl (pictured), which is on the Kent and East Sussex border, as well as our Darwell and Powdermill reservoirs to the north of Hastings.

"We're continuing to monitor the situation closely, with clear plans in place to make sure we're fully prepared, should the relatively dry weather continue in the months ahead."

South East Water is more confident.

Its head of water resources, Lee Dance, said: "We closely monitor weather conditions and water resources on a regular basis.

"Although it's has been a drier than normal winter we do not envisage water shortages this summer.

"Our aquifers are in a good position and our reservoirs at Ardingly and Arlington in Sussex are full or almost full.

"But whatever the weather, we do ask our customers to use water wisely, especially in the drier summer months. On the hottest days, peak demand can reach 700 million litres a day - up from the daily average of 540 million litres a day - across South East Water's supply area."

So just what can we expect over the coming months from the weather?

While the likes of the Met Office do not like to look so far in advance at a situation which can change so swiftly, we asked some of the county's amateur forecasters what they think we have in store.

Lester Gosbee is a farmer himself, and admits he is worried for his crops but says tennis fans should be in for a

treat by the time Andy Murray starts the defence of his title in June.

Mr Gosbee, who runs Manor Farm, Frittenden, told us: "I am confident it will be a very fine May followed by a flaming June.

"There is a good chance we are going to get up to 32 degrees celsius in June.

"And is it all down to the way the jet stream goes across our country.

"Last June was wet because the jet stream was much further south than it normally is. During summer time, the jet stream normally lies between the Faroe Islands and Iceland.

"I think it will be in its normal position this year, which means we will get southerly winds coming up from the Azores.

"So the worrying theme of low average rainfall will continue along with hot spells from mid-June onwards."

"Wimbledon [which starts the last week of June] could be blessed with wonderful weather this year.

"But it may not be such smooth running for the rest of us. We are, in this part of the world, half a year short of rainfall.

"The only wet month we have had since July was November.

"Now, if we do get rainfall, which is extremely unlikely, the vegetation takes it, and during most summers, 95 per cent of the moisture just evaporates unless you get extremely wet summers like 2012.

"I am confident there will be droughts. The implications for farmers growing hay and silage could be very worrying. The lack of rainfall will also affect arable farmers. So famers could be in trouble from now onwards.

"If we get the odd thunderstorm that will put the rainfall shortage back. But like I said, the vegetation will take it all, and it doesn't get through to the aquifers.

"I think the water companies will be worried, particularly later in the summer.

"By August they will want to start restricting water in this county."

Dave 'The Weather' King, from Edenbridge, uses past records and a host of natural events to gauge what is on the horizon, including the state of crops and bird movements.

He feels the outlook is not as bleak and predicts plenty of rain.

He told KoS: "This summer will be warm and damp.

"There will be no really hot sustained barbecue periods, but no major floods either, generally warm and rainy to bring the crops along.

"It will be a damp May coming along, as currently we are into a long period of no measurable rainfall, therefore a drought by definition. There has been only 10mm recently and less than 60 per cent of the usual rain last month too.

"Soil needs the moisture as does the grass and crops.

"The first two weeks of June will be fairly dry with sunshine, it is hay and pea harvest time, so both crops will be harvested quite well in reasonable conditions. The rest of June will be damp and raining but warm.

"July will also be damp and warm; maybe a drier period July 12 to 14, since July 14 is considered to be one of the hottest and driest days of the month.

"The cuckoo arrived 20 days early therefore will depart 20 days early too. This indicates that, whereas he normally departs the first week of July, having arrived on April 14, he will depart mid-June since it being wet there will be less insects to eat, and he will depart to warmer climes to feed.

"August 5 to 15 will be the best part of summer 2017, with some hot dry sunny days, barbecue weather even, towards the end of this period, akin to the final week of the 2012 London Olympics when it progressively got hotter each day. Then a damp but warm end to the end of the month. Maybe the odd thunderstorm too.

"The first two weeks of September will be benign, dry and calm for what is left of the fruit and late grain harvest before the arrival of the September equinoctial storms."

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Regeneration project picks up pace as bosses reveal investment

We visited Folkestone to see progress on town's huge renovation scheme

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A LONG-TERM project to regenerate Folkestone seafront has now received some £74million of investment, bosses have confirmed.

The once-thriving seaside strip was ingrained in Kent's history as thousands regularly flocked to enjoy the Rotunda funfair, amusement arcades and regular Sunday market.

But after being demolished over a decade ago, the site has been left desolate ever since.

In stepped a Victorian-style benefactor in the shape of billionaire Sir Roger De Haan, whose charitable trust has helped regenerate the whole town, including a £7m facelift of the Creative Quarter.

A £5m cash injection from Kent's economic and business champions the South East Local Enterprise Partnership has helped get this seafront project going, but it is otherwise funded purely from the pockets of Sir Roger, who made his fortune through the sale of the Saga group in 2004.

Just over two years ago, outline planning consent was granted for up to a thousand residential units, including beach houses, apartments and town houses, with a range of commercial spaces and leisure facilities designed to serve a new community.

The scale of the project is huge, with the refurbished Harbour Arm - re-opened last year to great fanfare - arguably at the heart of it all.

Over the sunny Easter weekend, thousands enjoyed the new places to eat and drink, and watched the waves crashing against the harbour.

However, when KoS visited the site this week, bosses told us what they really wanted to prioritise was a way of using the development to tell a story of Folkestone's history - both recent and ancient.

Indeed, regeneration will be shaped around listed structures including the lighthouse and viaduct which carried trains across the harbour, as a nod to the town's heritage, as Peter Bettley of the Folkestone Harbour Company explained.

"Over the last six months we've been conducting a thorough survey using an experienced expert looking at Folkestone's maritime history," he said.

FUTURE: Houses planned to be built on Folkestone seafront.

"That's obviously the history of the harbour, though we don't just mean back to 1800 when that story began, but the reasons why it was here.

"You can go back a couple of thousand years when there were fishing boats drawing up on the beach, and it goes back even further if you think about it because there's the Roman Villa site just beyond the Martello tower and evidence of Bronze and Iron Age settlements before that, when arts and crafts were traded with continental Europe.

"The idea is to assemble a whole load of visual material, like these artefacts but also a narrative that will help people to understand why the town is here, why the harbour is here.

"People tend to focus on just the modern history of Folkestone since the harbour was built and the railways came, but we've got a much broader story to tell and we think we can do that.

"The question is now, with all this material, how we tell this story.

"It might be an exhibition, it might be signage or theatre or film - we've got spaces in which we can do it, but we want to make sure we do it well and in such a way that remains interesting and dynamic into the future."

New access to the Harbour Arm will be created by using the viaduct as a pedestrian walkway, after work began earlier this year, providing an alternative route to the rather less scenic car park that visitors currently have to traipse through.

The former harbour station is currently being renovated, with bosses unable to start the work at the same time as the Harbour Arm due to it still being under the control of Network Rail.

Surviving features such as the glass canopies will be restored to retain that aura of history.

Mr Bettley added: "The idea is not to leave it as it was, because it was actually a mess, and hadn't been available to the public for decades.

EXCITING: CGI of landscapred viaduct.

"But there are individual features on the Harbour Arm that will also be in the station renovation and on the viaduct that do draw out the history and heritage of the site."

Other ongoing work includes the removal of some 30,000 cubic metres of sand in a huge dredging operation, as well as efforts to prepare the housing development site, which has been ongoing over the winter and spring months, so as to minimise disruption and irritation going into the summer.

The risk of flooding is being managed and mitigated by using additional shingle to reinforce the beach, making it wider and higher at its narrowest and lowest points.

Active beach management will take place on an ongoing basis, as already happens at other points along the coast.

Bosses were coy, however, on how quickly we can expect to see construction begin on homes and services, but that it needed to be right for future residents, and not simply a tourist attraction.

"The whole mantra is Folkestone was conceived once upon a time as a place for people to come and visit," Mr Bettley said.

"But a lot of those visitor attractions didn't last very long - the Hotel Grand and Metropole were only operating for about 50 years as hotels, they've since operated for much longer as converted apartments.

"Folkestone needs an economy that works for 12 months of the year.

"It needs to be good for people to live and work here rather than just focusing on those visiting in the summer months or for weekends in spring and autumn.

"The idea is to consolidate Folkestone as that great place to live and work, and if people then visit as well, that's the icing on the cake."

HERITAGE: Folkestone Harbour station renovation.

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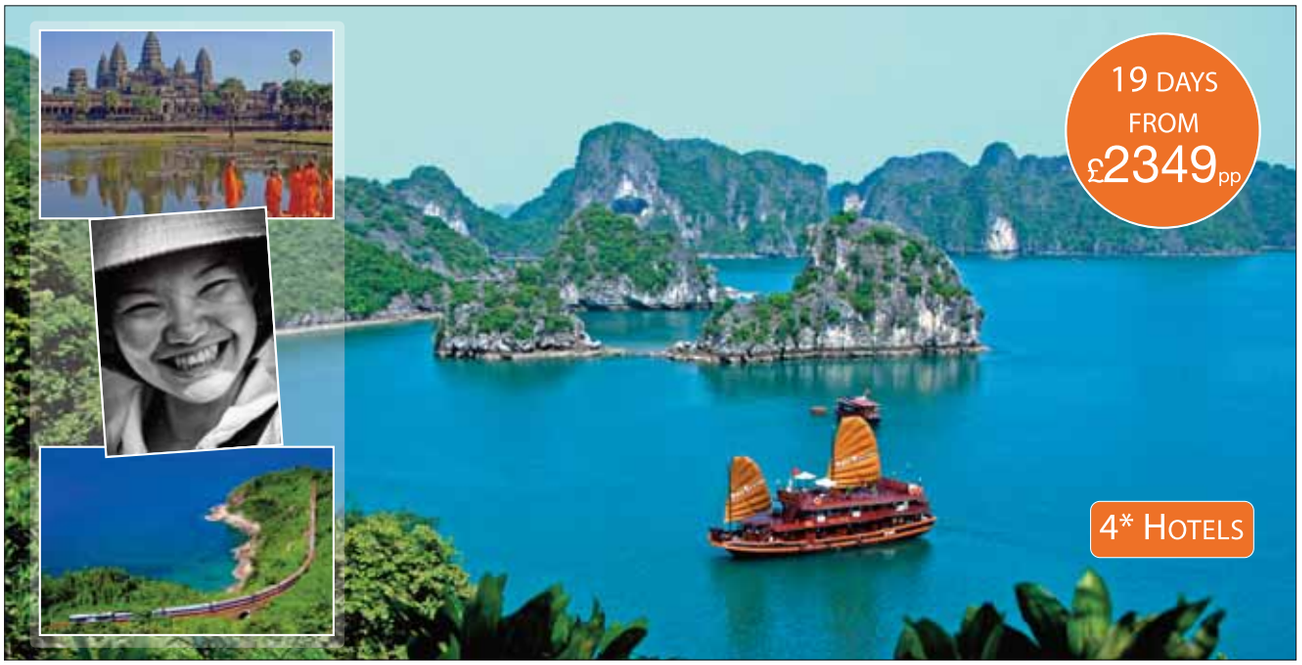

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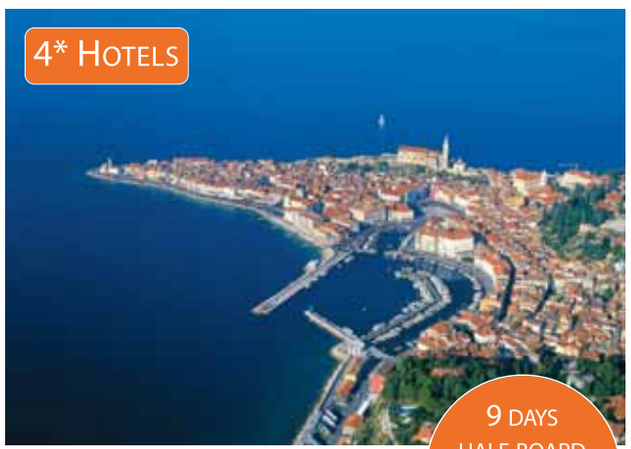

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■ Fresh air and great facilities at parks around the county

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From holiday lets to fulfilling that dream of having a holiday home to escape to, the modern mobile home continues to develop a loyal, and growing, following.

Variety, value and plenty of entertainment or peace and quiet - the caravan park is still a hit

Quintessentially British, they are not only just a big draw for those who prefer to holiday closer to home, but also are seeing more and more visitors from overseas taking advantage too.

Max Tanner is the general manager of The Foxhunter Park, Monkton, near Ramsgate.

He said: "This style of holiday is really popular because it is quick, easy, no airports unless you are coming in from abroad, and we do get overseas visitors, plus affordable with all the conveniences you have at home.

"Camping is great, but a lot of people like their home comforts too with gas, electricity, and of course WiFi.

"Our prices range from £225 to £419 a week for a two-bedroom holiday home."

Top of the range caravans at most Kent parks will include the likes of a microwave, fridge/freezer, DVD, additional toilet, double glazing, veranda and garden furniture.

Many will include bed linen, but parks suggest visitors bring their own towels. There is very often a place to eat and be entertained on the various Kent sites too.

Steve King, general manger at Haven's Allhallows Holiday Park, say they also arrange experience days, which are popular excursions to local attractions.

He said the parks always try to make everything as easy as possible for holiday makers.

"When it comes to choosing a perfect holiday home, a good park should have a wide range. And the comforts of home should be included like central heating and double glazing, iPod docking stations, built in WiFi, en-suite bathrooms and flat screen TVs.

"At Haven, with two-and-three-bedroom holiday homes to choose from you can sleep up to eight people so it's ideal for family and friends."

A range of locations on a development is vital, and a leading park will offer a choice of pitches to suit everyone whether they are looking for peace and tranquillity, or be right in the middle of it all and, of course, others must include beautiful views.

Parkdean Resorts in Kent has a reputation for being among the best in the country. It has locations at Ashcroft Coast and Shurland Dale on the Isle of Sheppey, Romney Sands in Greatstone and St Margaret's Bay in St Margaret's-at-Cliffe with a variety of accommodation including caravans and apartments. Some even allow pets.

For many, however, the attraction of a summer holiday extends to wanting to own their own property there - and more and more are doing just that.

Turn over to see how you can follow in their footsteps.

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Dreamed of a holiday home? Make it a reality

Some people love the lifestyle so much, they buy their own static caravans on a recognised and well-run site.

Costing from anywhere from £8,000 to £100,000, the homes can also be let out too - helping to create an income to off-set the costs.

To buy will usually see terms of around 20 to 50 years. Additional costs include site fees, rates, utilities and insurance, while many choose to upgrade every five to 10 years.

Max Tanner is general manager at Foxhunter Park in Monkton. He said: "The attraction of buying a static caravan as a holiday home makes plenty of sense. It can be rented to others when the owner is not using it creating a fresh revenue stream. Everything is easy to organise and choosing a well-managed site makes it even simpler.

"And most sites have plenty of entertainment already in place like a swimming pool, bar, club, tennis courts and play area."

Parkdean Resorts offers ownership at all four of its Kent parks with prices starting from under £9,000.

A spokesman for the company said: "There are payment options available with deposits usually starting from 10 per cent.

"Annual running costs of a holiday home vary on a park by park and location of pitch basis. Owners are also given the opportunity to let out their holiday homes in order to earn money towards the running costs."

The company said potential buyers also need to be aware most parks will have a variable pitch fee, and returns from rentals are subject to age, make, model and condition of a caravan so careful consideration is needed before diving in.

Haven manager Steve King said "As an owner of a static caravan, the site fees will cover all your exclusive owners' perks and events, general park upkeep. At Haven they also get a privilege card giving discounts around the park."

And the upkeep of the site is something owners must adhere to.

Adds Max Tanner: "We hold our owners to high standards of repair and cleanliness, and conduct weekly inspections of the park.

"If anything is broken, dirty, or falls foul of our rules like displaying things like gnomes and coloured fairy lights, we'll write to the owner giving them a week to rectify. If they don't, we'll sort it in house, and pass the cost on.

"We offer good rates on part exchange, so a lot of people will typically upgrade every five to 10 years, while their old caravan still holds a decent amount of residual value. Think of them more in terms of cars than houses in that sense."

In terms of upgrading their static caravan, Mr Tanner said: "People tend to leave them as they are internally, and when we sell them we usually include an external decking area in the price. We have had a few people spend money putting in things like new kitchens, but that doesn't come through us. Aftermarket modifications usually have a negative effect on the value of the caravan, so we tend to advise against it."

A good alternative to a static caravan is something on wheels, and better yet, built into the main vehicle chassis so it doesn't need towing.

Kent Motorhome Centre in Aylesford said it can supply four berth vehicles for around £50,000 to clearance vehicles at £14,000, and will even buy them back when a customer wants to move on.

These vehicles can, of course, provide much more mobility, but can have restricted facilities inside and finding a place to park needs some forward planning, depending on the size of the motorhome.

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Wayside is a small, privately owned holiday park that has been lovingly landscaped throughout.

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Located on the Isle of Thanet, a true gem on the south eastern corner of Kent that boasts miles of gorgeous sandy beaches, as well as a vast array of stunning countryside and pretty villages to experience too. This park is ideal for families and couples who are seeking rural surroundings with a luxurious and relaxing feel.

Wayside Caravan Park has been designed with peace and tranquillity in mind and for that reason you won't find a shop onsite, however, Minster Village is roughly half a mile away and offers a wide range of shops, pubs and restaurants that are bound to meet your requirements.

Way Inn, the onsite wine bar is open on weekends and offers a place for holidaymakers to relax and socialise without having to venture out of the park.

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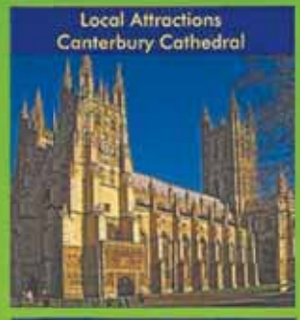

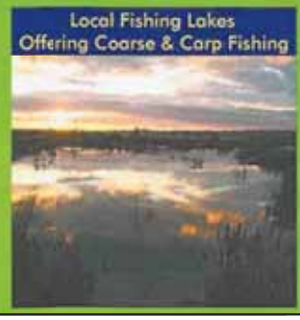

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DIFFERENT: Gates has taken a step out of his comfort zone in what is the first comedy role he has ever played

Singer Gareth Gates turns to comedy in Footloose role

He's made a name for himself in the musical theatre industry since Pop Idol...

MOST people will remember Gareth Gates from Pop Idol, but since his 2003 success on the show, he's made a name for himself in musical theatre.

And in July he's coming to Bromley, alongside Maureen Nolan, in Footloose, as comedy cowboy - Willard.

The show follows the same plot as the 1980s rock 'n' roll hit film.

City boy Ren thinks life is bad enough when he's forced to move to a rural backwater in America.

But his world comes to a standstill when he arrives at Bomont to find dancing and rock music are banned.

Taking matters into his own hands, soon Ren has all hell breaking loose and the whole town on its feet.

Gates, whose musical theatre credits also include Les Miserables, Legally Blonde and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, says he feels comfortable in his role as Willard, because he can relate to him.

"Willard can't dance, and he finds it really hard to speak to girls as he's shy, which are definitely two aspects of life I can relate to," he says.

"I'm really not a great dancer, but obviously working in musical theatre I have to try my best.

"Willard does have a big dance routine at the end of the show, and I love that bit. His character really develops throughout as he learns to dance and builds confidence."

This is the performer's first time playing a comic character though, but it's a challenge he's enjoying.

"I like to challenge myself when it comes to acting, which is what this role allows me to do.

"I usually play the prince or one of the more serious characters."

It's been non-stop for Gates since Pop Idol, as he tells KoS: "I've actually been on the road and touring now for 15 years, which when you think ahout it is a very long time.

"It is crazy at times and I do also find it difficult sometimes but it also means I get to see the country, and meet some amazing people along the way.

"I wouldn't trade it."

He will be starring in Footloose alongside Maureen Nolan, who plays Vi Moore.

"Maureen's great, she's such a lovely woman. She's a legend in her own right. It's quite nice to be around the likes of her and the rest of the cast," he said.

"All the actors also play instruments, we don't have a separate band. They are just a very talented bunch. Working amongst people like that is incredible."

Speaking of why people should come and see the show, Gates said: "It's just a really fantastic show, everyone has worked really hard to make the show come together, and we all work will on stage as a team.

"It is based on the 1984 film, which is a film that everyone loves. The stage adaptation definietly does the storyline justice, so if you loved the film, you're sure to love this as well.

"I hope people leave feeling really upbeat and happy."

The show is coming to the Churchill Theatre in Bromley from July 19-22.

For tickets or more information visit churchilltheatre.co.uk or call 020 3285 6000.

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Women Seeking

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JOY happily married, bi curious, blonde hair, blue eyes, big boobs, seeks someone to join in a bit of bedroom fun! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426845**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3000 Box 419673**

ANNE blonde hair, blue eyes, seeks males for no strings adult fun! Call and leave a number for me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426843**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3008 Box: 409715**

MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426349**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3016 Box: 413399**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3020 Box 421375**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3004 Box 422365**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

KAREN, 52yrs, attractive with GSOH, very active and outgoing. If you are 40+ give me a call, lets have a chat, maybe meet up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426339**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3012 Box 426201**

CAROLINE, attractive mature lady, various interests, hoping to meet a smart gent for socialising, perhaps leading to something more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426347**

BRUNETTE lady, 70, slim, sophisticated, size 10, kind of like Helen Mirren as a brunette, lives near Tunbridge Wells, WLTM a genuine, hopefully family oriented gentleman, for genuine friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424877**

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HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3028 Box 426205**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3032 Box 425979**

LADY, 70, 5ft6, divorced, blonde hair, brown eyes, friendly, lives in the Kent area, likes walking, holidays, WLTM somebody for friendship in the local area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426193**

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PIA, Asian lady, 57yrs, very caring and a little subservient and quiet. I am a good cook and loyal friend. Pls text me if you are kind man 55+ **Text Only. Mailbox 4013378**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327**

NATALIA, black beauty! I am late 50s but still fit with a good figure and lovely skin and eyes. I would like to meet a nice white gentleman, older than myself for chats, maybe more. **Text Only. Mailbox 4107799**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341**

ANETTA, black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425933**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425931**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425929**

SUE, outgoing lady, enjoys life, likes meals, holidays, WLTM mature gentleman to share interests and spend quality time together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424669**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425927**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424781**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339**

Men Seeking

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JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

CARING sociable, GS0H, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337**

LOVING lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425325**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425323**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady, young looking 60s, genuine and kind, seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424671**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422469**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fares, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207**

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JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTM slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043**

LIVELY old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

GENTLEMAN, 76yrs old, clean-shaven with a good head of hair and a smart dresser, hoping to meet lady for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423645**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service **FREE** visit: ***localgaydate.co.uk***

GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

ROBBIE, 54, reasonably fit, bi-curious, I'm very inexperienced and would like to meet a CD or TV preferably but not essential for a bit of fun. Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421357**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

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Jason Manford makes return to stand-up circuit next spring

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

COMEDIAN Jason Manford is bringing his new stand-up show, Muddle Class, to Margate in 2018.

Manford has spent the last few years busy with TV projects since his last stand-up show but Muddle Class is his comeback, and brings with it all new material.

The show will talk about him growing up working class then finding, over the years, that part of him has become middle class.

Manford said: "Somebody said to me on my Facebook fan page, 'it's been ages since you've toured'. I thought 'no way, it was last year, wasn't it? Anyway, long story short, they were right, it was years ago."

Manford hasn't toured since 2013, but says he "just got fooled cos I've been on tour doing musicals and the last tour is repeated on Dave ja Vu 13 times a day.

"So, I've been putting some stuff together, looking at my life and how it's changed over the years, how the world has changed and how my parents haven't changed a bit. It's going to be a great tour and I can't wait to see you there."

RETURNING: This will be the first time Jason Manford has toured since 2013

Manford first became well-known to the public when he was a guest on the Channel 4 panel show, 8 Out of 10 Cats, presented by Jimmy Carr. He would then go on to replace team captain Dave Spikey in 2007 and continued in the role until 2011.

Since then, Manford has presented Sky Three's Premier League Allstars Extra Time, Channel 4's Tonightly, performed at the Royal Variety Performance, on Channel 4's Comedy Gala, ITV1's The Comedy Annual 2010, BBC1's Would I Lie to You, become a regular on ITV1's Odd One In with Peter Andre and given his voice to BBC1's acclaimed Walk on the Wild Side.

The last time he performed in Kent was in Margate and Folkestone in 2013 when he turned his hand to opera after winning ITV's Born to Shine.

Muddle Class is coming to Margate's Winter Gardens on March 3 2018, Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on April 18 2018, and Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on May 18 2018.

For tickets or more information visit margatewintergardens.co.uk, assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk, or leascliffhall.co.uk.

The Beauty of Rock

MARTIN Turner, of rock band Wishbone Ash, has announced his Beauty of Chaos tour, will be coming to Chislehurst's Beaverwood Club on May 18.

For tickets visit thebeaverwoodclub.co.uk

Margate's Rockerland

TOY, Howling Bells and Paves have been announced to play alongside headliners The Kills at Margate Wonderland Festival on May 28, bringing rock and roll to Dreamland.

For more information and tickets (£25 not including transport) visit margatewonderland.com

May Day Festival events

CELEBRATE May Day at the historic Hever Castle from April 29 – May 1 with a host of customs and activities.

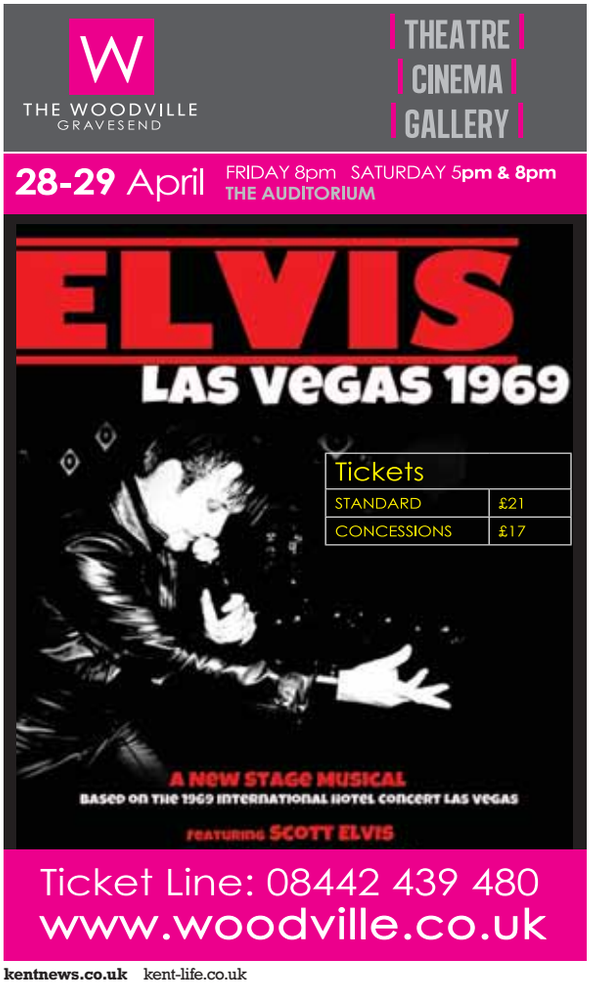
See the crowning of the May Queen, and dance around the Maypole. Visit hevercastle.co.uk

Keeping It Light with Lock

SEAN Lock is touring again with his new stand-up, Keep it Light, which is coming to Margate's Theatre Royal on April 27.

He is best known for his role as a team captain on Channel 4 comedy panel show 8 Out of 10 Cats since it began in 2005 up to 2015.

For tickets visit theatreroyalmargate.com



Charity single is released

WELLING singer, Alex Askew, who served with the RAF, is releasing a single on April 23 to raise money for charity SSAFA.

For more information follow the hastag #JustAnotherWeek on Twitter.

Project calls for dancers

GRAVESHAM Borough Council is calling out for anyone who is interested in dancing to be part of its Dancing in the Street project, a part of this year's Riverside Festival on July 22.

Go along to The Woodville on May 12 from 6pm to 8pm if interested in being a part of the five consecutive flash mobs throughout town.

Comedy takes Rich turn

Comedian Rich Hall is touring and coming to Margate's Theatre Royal on June 1.

He's recently appeared on BBC 2's Live At The Apollo.

For tickets visit theatreroyal-margate.com

Dancing Queens assemble

SUNDAY night and the lights are low... Orchard Theatre is the place to go...

ABBA concert, Thank You For The Music, is coming to the Dartford theatre on June 4.

The show promises performances of greatest hits such as Waterloo, and Mamma Mia.

For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

Curry, comedy, cabaret and charity night out

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

A GRAVESEND woman is raising money for the British Heart Foundation by organising a night of curry, comedy and cabaret.

Philippa Dunstan, has organised the event - Anyone Who Has A Heart - because her husband, Sam Magee, was born with a heart condition.

Mr Magee's condition has required ongoing treatment since birth and he is currently waiting for a heart and lung transplant.

Mrs Dunstan said: "I wanted to organise this event because The BHF is a charity that my whole family is extremely passionate about.

"The research for new surgical procedures and drugs enabled through their fundraising saves so many lives. Were it not for the BHF Sam would not have made it to 44."

Anyone Who Has A Heart guests will mingle with celebrities, be entertained by a walking magician and enjoy a glass of bubbly during a red carpet reception.

The evening will include a curry, comedy entertainment including award-winning comedian Sooz Kempner, and live music from West End Singer Emma Lindar.

A disco provided by Stan Lee King will round the evening off.

The show will be hosted by comic duo Ant Payne and Rob Pearce.

Mr Pearce said: "We're really excited to be supporting the BHF and hosting this event at one of our favourite theatres. It's going to be a great night with loads of special guests, surprises and prizes too."

Mrs Dunstan added: "This isn't about helping Sam alone, it's about raising money for research which has kept him and so many others alive."

"I am keen to promote this event as a celebration and it is set to be a great evening with lots of fun. I really hope that people will come along and join us."

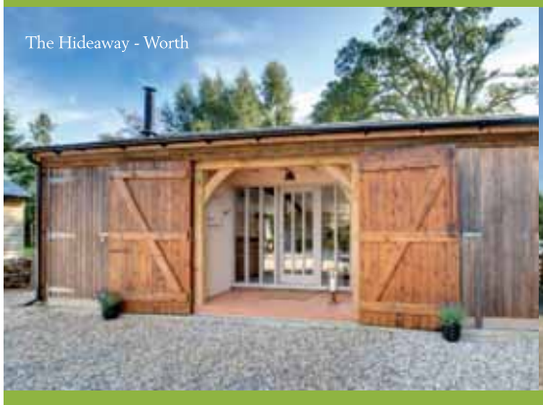
The evening is taking place on May 13 at Gravesend's Woodville Theatre.

To book visit woodville.co.uk.

CELEBRATION: Philippa and Sam when they got married

WAITING: Sam is currently on the transplant list

www.kentandsussexcottages.co.uk


The Hideaway - Worth

The Corn Bin - Sedlescombe

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'Serving kids plain pasta is weird,' says Thomson

Mum-of-three and National Trust food ambassador Claire Thomson says kids need food excitement

FAMILY food ambassador for the National Trust, chef, and mum-of-three, Claire Thomson says, "I don't serve plain pasta and my kids would think it was weird.

"They're excited by the food in front of them, the kitchen is the axis of my home life and I want them to feel that food is a really normal thing, that it's not fetishised or not given enough credence."

If this sounds like a manifesto for how to give kids a love of good food, it is. Thomson, 37, has spent the last five years showing the world exactly how we could be feeding children through her daily '5oclockapron' Instagram and Twitter posts.

The dishes she makes for her daughters at five o'clock each day include sumptuous-looking bowls of 'tamarind & turmeric chicken broth with soba noodles and cucumber', or 'seared monkfish with potatoes, chard stalks, serrano ham and rosemary'.

She can't totally escape pasta though: "I've had some children come for play dates and that's all they want to eat, but as a grown-up, you've allowed that to happen if you're serving plain pasta."

Two years on from her debut cookbook, The 5'Clock Apron: Proper Food For Modern Families, Thomson has now penned the National Trust Family Cookbook.

The recipes in it are categorised by how long they take to cook, with sections for on-the-go breakfasts and lunch box alternatives, from tasty-sounding Yogurt And Cardamom Chicken Wraps and Pea And Halloumi Fritters to Vietnamese Noodle Salad - all with substitutes so you can suit the ingredients to your family's tastes.

CHEF: Claire has spent the last five years showing how to cook for kids

"It's really important to get your kids to help you, otherwise the food lands in front of them and they're expected to eat it," Thomson adds. "There's a community to being in a family."

And she's not an advocate for 'hiding' vegetables.

"Hiding seven different types of vegetables in a pizza sauce is fundamentally what I think is wrong about children's food. It's really important you identify vegetables and acknowledge they're on their plate and they know why they're good for them, rather than hiding them."

Now based in Bristol, Thomson was born in Zimbabwe and travelled "extensively" with her New Zealander husband, before they settled in the UK to raise their daughters Grace, 10, Ivy, seven and four-year-old Dot.

And she's not a total stranger to fussy eaters, admitting that "Dot's not a saint - there are some days she just wants to eat boiled eggs for breakfast, lunch and dinner".

"That's fine, but I don't let her do it every day. I think fussy eaters are a problem, but you just carry on and eventually, they turn a corner and start eating."

A creepy family affair

THE Addams Family starring EastEnders' Samantha Womack, Les Dennis and Carrie Hope Fletcher has recently announced that it is also coming to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from May 23-27.

Samantha takes on the role of Morticia, and recently appeared on BBC 1's The One Show to promote the theatre production.

For tickets visit the venue's website at marlowetheatre.com

Charities unite for fair

THE Association of Bexley Charities '78 is holding a spring fair at the United Reformed Church, Bexleyheath on April 29 from 9.45 am - 1.00 pm

The following charities will have stalls: Alzheimers Society, Bexley Downs Syndrome Group, Bexley Smile, Breast Cancer Now, Cats Protection Bexley and Dartford, Demelza Hospice, and Motor Neurone Disease Association. The fair is free entry.

From opera to pop

LEADING men from London's West End combine to deliver a blend of music ranging from opera to pop, and everything in between, when they come to Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre on May 14.

The Opera Boys combine their classically trained voices with their experience and personality to deliver re-invented songs.

For tickets visit parkwoodtheatres.co.uk/Hazlitt-Theatre

Queens will rock you

A TRIBUTE act to the legendary band fronted by Freddie Mercury, Killer Queen, will be at Dartford's Orchard Theatre on May 24.

Lead singer Patrick Myers said "Our first show back in 1993 changed my life. We thought our band would last maybe a summer at the most but we're still going."

For tickets or more information visit orchardtheatre.co.uk

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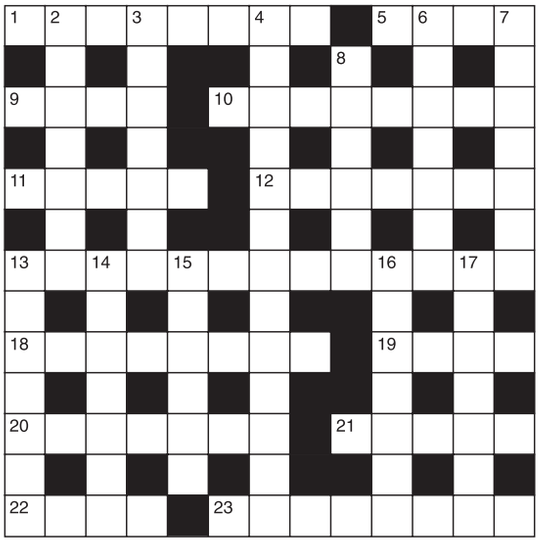
PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

1. Interrogate (8)
5. Blackleg (4)
9. Blemish (4)
10. Filter (8)
11. Cut (5)
12. Presage (7)
13. Great Britain (6,7)
18. Dazzling (8)
19. Thought (4)
20. Actuate (7)
21. Filch (5)
22. Oaf (4)
23. Miscellaneous (8)

Down

2. Dirty (7)
3. Asp (7)
4. Candour (13)
6. Strive (7)
7. Ennui (7)
8. Infertile (6)
13. Rebuke (7)
14. Beginning (7)
15. Charm (6)
16. Sparkle (7)
17. Intimidate (7)

Cryptic

Across

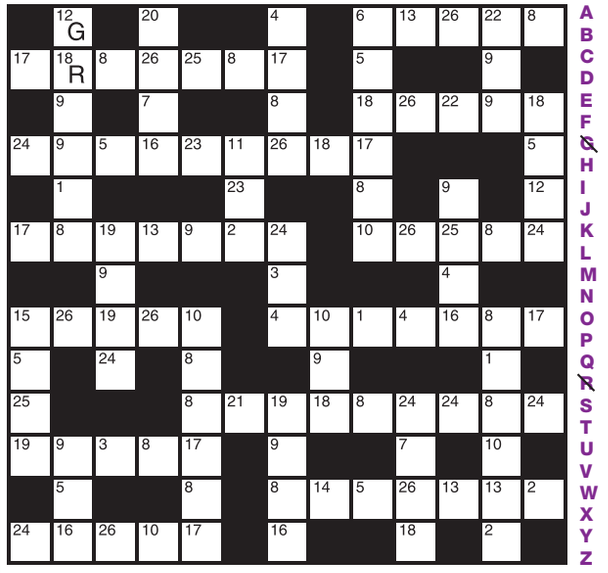
1. Stick out as impolite on spilling port (8)
5. Effective tablet abstainer lost (4)
9. A pair of braces? (4)
10. Use a bolt to make complete (8)
11. Almost finally produce map collection (5)
12. Measuring volume by the French in the compartment (7)
13. Evidence of congenial times at school? (8,5)
18. Don't forget about the one who's paid his sub! (8)
19. Wasted lots of spare time initially (4)
20. Implore 1000 missing men to discuss terms (7)
21. Fish right in the light (5)
22. Try out some favourite strokes (4)
23. Continues to use the money gained (8)

Down

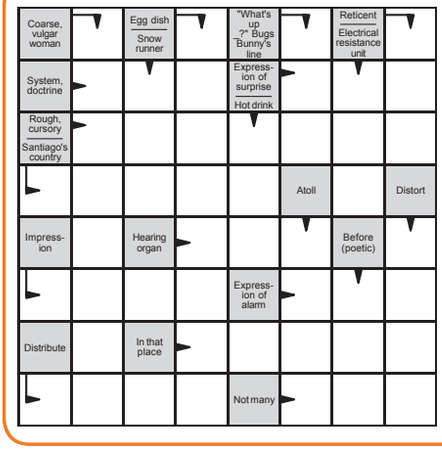
2. Isn't cockerel ever up and about? (7)
3. Caterer constructs row of houses (7)
4. What he picks up is owed (4,9)
6. Curb one chucker-out (7)
7. Judgment permits small holes (7)
8. Fight doctor in overall (6)
13. Fret badly about workers in agitation (7)
14. The residents are fashionable fellow workers (7)
15. Stunning figure? (6)
16. Make bigger general order (7)
17. Top performer in the mire is hot stuff! (7)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword



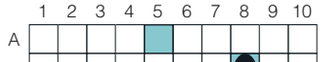
Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

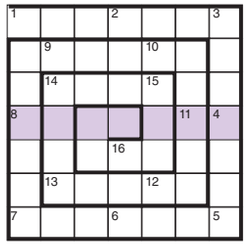
Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Egg-shaped
2. Bloomer, say
3. Vendetta
4. Terrible fate
5. Insect
6. Stringed instrument
7. Hairstyle
8. Stain
9. Osculate
10. Scorch
11. Ladder section
12. Sport
13. Revolting
14. Rich soil
15. Handle clumsily
16. Inventory

Keyword clue: A condiment

SUDOKU

Hard

	1		4		7		2	
		4		1		7		
7				9				8
	7						6	
			9	5	8			
	5						1	
5				3				2
		1		7		6		
	2		5		6		8	

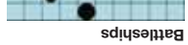
Easy

		2	4	5			6	
8	3				6			5
			8	9		1	4	
	8	3			7	6		
		1		2				8
4		5	6			3	9	
7		6		3	9			
	2		7				1	9
	4			1	8	7		

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships



Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 1 Protrude; 5 Able; 9 Four; 10 Absolute; 11 Atlas; 12 Cubicle; 13 Friendly terms; 18 Remember; 19 Lost; 20 Entreat; 21 Bream; 22 Test; 23 Proceeds. Down: 2 Rooster; 3 Terrace; 4 Debt collector; 6 Bouncer; 7 Eyelets; 8 Combat; 13 Fermenting; 14 Inmates; 15 Number; 16 Enlarge; 17 Mustard.

Quick
Across: 1 Question; 5 Scab; 9 Scar; 10 Strainer; 11 Sever; 12 Portend; 13 United Kingdom; 18 Blinding; 19 Idea; 20 Animate; 21 Steal; 22 Dolt; 23 Assorted. Down: 2 Unclean; 3 Serpent; 4 Outspokenness; 6 Contend; 7 Boredom; 8 Barren; 13 Upbraid; 14 Initial; 15 Endear; 16 Glitter; 17 Overawe.

Codeword

1=V, 2=Y, 3=K, 4=I, 5=U, 6=B, 7=C, 8=E, 9=O, 10=N, 11=W, 12=G, 13=L, 14=Q, 15=J, 16=T, 17=D, 18=R, 19=P, 20=F, 21=X, 22=Z, 23=H, 24=S, 25=M, 26=A

Word Spiral
1 Oval; 2 Loaf; 3 Feud; 4 Doom; 5 Moth; 6 Harp; 7 Perm; 8 Mark; 9 Kiss; 10 Sear; 11 Rung; 12 Golf; 13 Foul; 14 Loam; 15 Maul; 16 List. **Keyword:** Mustard

Sudoku - Easy

1	9	2	4	5	3	8	6	7
8	3	4	1	7	6	9	2	5
6	5	7	8	9	2	1	4	3
2	8	3	9	4	7	6	5	1
9	6	1	3	2	5	4	7	8
4	7	5	6	8	1	3	9	2
7	1	6	5	3	9	2	8	4
3	2	8	7	6	4	5	1	9
5	4	9	2	1	8	7	3	6

Sudoku - Hard

9	1	5	4	8	7	3	2	6
6	8	4	2	1	3	7	9	5
7	3	2	6	9	5	1	4	8
8	7	9	3	2	1	5	6	4
1	4	6	9	5	8	2	3	7
2	5	3	7	6	4	8	1	9
5	6	8	1	3	9	4	7	2
4	9	1	8	7	2	6	5	3
3	2	7	5	4	6	9	8	1

For the ones who knock...

Eileen and Roger Wise joined the Breaking Bad tour in New Mexico on the trail of Heisenberg, Jesse, Gus and Skyler. But did they find them?

'Good morning Mr Roger and Miss Eileen, this is Heisenberg – are you ready to go and do some cooking'?

A familiar figure in dark glasses and porkpie hat led us to his limo ready for an 'awesome' (as Jessie might say) trip around Albuquerque into 'Breaking Bad' territory, a land of apparent middle-class respectability undercut by drug-dealing, money-laundering, kidnapping and murder!

Briefly, in case anyone doesn't know, Breaking Bad is one of the great TV series of all time (up there with Tinker, Tailor, Solider, Spy), the story of an unlikely partnership between middle-aged chemistry teacher Walter White and youthful drug dealer Jesse Pinkman, whose quest is to manufacture enough crystal meth to financially support Walt's family when he dies from inoperable cancer.

An unlikely plot, but a series suffused with crackling dialogue, wit, tension and menace – fronted by a partnership to rival Holmes and Watson. A shop owner in ABQ's Old Town, doing a good trade in BB T-shirts, put her finger on it: 'It's the age-old morality tale – it's good and evil. It's really just Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde revisited'.

Dr Jekyll, aka Walter White, aka his alter ego Heisenberg, aka our genial and knowledgeable host Luigi, whisked us on a 17-stop tour of Walt and Jessie's haunts.

Luigi is not the only one ploughing this furrow; there is another Breaking Bad RV Tour, where you can join six or seven others in the sort of vehicle in which the duo cooked up their meth. But Luigi's tour was great for getting a feel of all the places where the series was filmed. The most requested location is Walt and Skyler's house at 3828 Piermont Drive. Luigi – fortunately – has established an amicable relationship with the owner, because she must be fed up of the constant attention from BB aficionados day in, day out. Fortunately she was driving away as we arrived, so we were able to linger awhile. Luigi told us she could have sold the house for five times its current market value.

EILEEN AND ROGER DID THE BREAKING BAD TRAIL IN NEW MEXICO

We stopped by the gaudy Dog House stall where Jessie bought a gun: lunched at Twisters diner, at the table where Walt had his first encounter with menacing Gus: lingered at the parking lot where Jessie kept his RV, wandered by the office of their sleazy lawyer Saul – now a restaurant called 'Simon's Saints': loitered in the giant car wash where Walt and (unwittingly) his wife Skyler laundered the drug money: and, poignantly, stood by the dam where Jesse and Walt bade their farewells.

'You know the business, and I know the chemistry. I'm thinking, maybe you and I could partner up?'

Luigi reminded us of this and many other quotes in a storytelling tour-de-force

As a parting momento, he presented us with the pink, scorched teddy bear that appears in the opening sequences in Season Two, floating in Walt's swimming pool. 'An exclusive gift for my great friends from England', he told us. I was pretty sure, after studying E-Bay, that it was another of Luigi's great stories. But we appreciated the gesture nonetheless!

HOW TO GET THERE

We flew Virgin Atlantic from London Heathrow to New York and United Airlines from New York to Santa Fe
www.virginatlantic.com
www.united.com

We stayed and dined at:
www.turquoisebear.com
www.fivegraces.com
www.lospoblanos.com
www.sierragrandelodge.com
www.ranchodechimayo.com
http://www.theescaperesort.com
www.lafondasantafe.com (La Fonda hotel and restaurant)
www.rosewoodhotels (Anasazi Inn and restaurant)
www.luigistours.com (Breaking Bad Tour)
www.hertz.com

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Manston's just a political pawn

BEWARE the siren voices of politicians: Paul Nuttall, Ukip's leader in last week's KoS 'suggesting' an airport at Manston could still be on the cards.

Elections are looming and they will say anything to garner a few votes, and keep your grandmother and children safe - they could become saleable assets if it yielded a vote or two.

John Ward Moorhouse,
Tunbridge Wells

Crossing choice was no secret

FINALLY it's officially announced; the worst kept secret in the history of proposals for a new road – the government's preferred choice is Option C.

They choreographed it well though – MP for Dartford Gareth Johnson making an apparently 'eleventh hour plea' to the government not to choose Dartford (Option A).

Then Chris Grayling appearing, to claim that he had visited both sites (Option B having been ruled out an earlier stage) and carefully studied all the evidence, before deciding that Option C was the 'right choice'.

However, the fact that it was already a 'done deal' was exposed when, after the announcement, local TV interviewed Johnson, and Natalie Chapman.

The latter is a spokesperson for the FTA, an organisation based in Tory heartland Tunbridge Wells, and it has a long history of successfully lobbying Tory governments.

The responses of the two to the interviewers questions were so similar it was almost as if they were 'singing from the same hymn sheet'; most notably with their use of the word 'resilience'. Apparently both were of the view that Option C would 'build more resilience into the road network'. Whatever that means.

In my former employment I met both of them on a number of occasions, but even I could be forgiven for thinking that Natalie Chapman was speaking for the constituents of Dartford and Gareth Johnson was speaking for the FTA.

Christopher Hudson-Gool,
Maidstone

Have they got the position wrong?

THE proposed Thames crossing at Gravesend is too near to the present crossing at Dartford, with just eight miles between the towns, whilst to greatly ease the flow of traffic in both Kent and Essex it needs to be no closer to Dartford than the Medway towns.

Ideally the crossing ought to be around Sheerness, if it were not for the tunnel distance to Southend, and of course, the USS Montgomery.

The economic option is to link the route from the existing junction at the interchange between the A2/M2, where Kent traffic would transfer to the A289, then travel off by a new road on the western side of the Hoo Peninsula and on through a tunnel under Thames to join with the A13 in Essex, close to Stanford-Le Hope.

I know local residents will be upset but the country comes first.

This is the route to the M25 and beyond to the north, to the A12.

Brian Richardson,
East Farleigh

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Don't ignore Manston compensation letters

AS part of the on-going development consent order (DCO) that RiverOak are engaged in, to return Manston Airport to active aviation use, there is currently a 'land referencing' exercise to inform people near the airport as to what is happening and what their rights to compensation may be.

Land referencing is the process of going from information such as the calculated noise contours near Manston Airport, to generating a list of who owns the affected properties.

It has come to the attention of the Save Manston Airport association (SMAa) that some people on other Facebook groups have written various posts suggesting these people near Manston Airport should not respond to RiverOak's land referencing agents Mouchel. SMAa would like to make sure these people realise that if they do not respond positively, this would mean that it is harder to compensate them as appropriate.

Land referencing is a key part of the DCO process and is strictly governed by statute and regulation. It is being managed on RiverOak's behalf by Mouchel, which is the largest land referencing consultancy in the UK. The land referencing exercise currently taking place is further evidence of the way the DCO process continues to move forward, slowly, carefully, professionally but inexorably.

They do have to ask for sensitive information such as mortgage details because that's what the rules require. And why? Because a mortgagee has "a legal interest" as defined in the Planning Act.

It is important to note that if Mouchel are sent away with a flea in their ear, they do not have to come back more than a set number of times, just those people may not go onto the list for consideration for further information and compensation.

Dr Beau Webber
Chairman, Save Manston Airport association

We need more lanes at tunnel

IF the computer generated image of the tunnels proposed for east of Gravesend is correct I can see it being almost useless before one shovel full of earth is removed: Only two lanes each way!

There should not even be any discussion as to having a toll. All the time the Dartford tunnel has one this must as well or who will use the Dartford Crossing when there is a free option a couple of miles away?

And finally, there was a wonderful moment when Mr Grayling was held up for over an hour due to traffic congestion. Now he knows the problems we face in Dartford first hand.

Ray Parkins,
Swanscombe

Time for others to take the pain

BRYAN Sweetland needs to rethink his comments about needing a new crossing when Option C is completed because of the deterioration of the Dartford tunnels.

If he did his homework he would realise the tunnels have regular maintenance and the oldest west tunnel has been in use since 1963, some 54 years. I see no sign of that or the east tunnel giving way.

The decision to put the crossing at Option C was a sensible and very logical choice. It will stop the unnecessary traffic from the east coast ports even entering the Dartford circuit if they intend to travel north.

As far as the hardship is concerned, my family and I have lived in Dartford well before the tunnel became a reality and as we were just 70 metres from the A282 had to tolerate the building and construction work day and night including the pollution and noise.

We have had to put up with this for over 50 years so it about time somebody else had some hardship.

Stan Saunders,
Dartford

London snapping up housing stock

HOUSING benefit claimants from London are being given local, privately rented accommodation ahead of Shepway residents because London councils are paying large deposits to secure tenancies.

This has been an on going issue in my area and others, but has recently become increasingly worse.

Local families with impeccable tenancy histories are being forced into b&b accommodation through no fault of their own, due to shortages in local housing supply.

Even if we build more homes, how can we guarantee that the same thing doesn't happen?

Housing officers do their best with the limited supply, and the council does not have the money to compete with rich London boroughs who are able to compete with these large deposits. It means local families missing out.

We call on our Conservative MP Damian Collins to protect Shepway residents from this ruthless practise.

Mary Lawes,
Ukip, Shepway District Council

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to East people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Chiddingstone Castle

by **Jane Jordan from Margate**

To see your photograph printed, email **editorial@kosmedia.co.uk**,. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives.

holidays

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Somerset Seaside 60s Party + Free Drinks

Pontins Sand Bay, Somerset Coast

16 June, 2017 • Quote: SA6-KOS

3 nights half board + Free Drinks
was ~~£159~~pp
Sale £139pp

Join us at Pontins Sand Bay resort, near Weston Super Mare in Somerset, for a Super Summer Party - for over 40s only - packed with entertainment. We've lined up a brilliant showbill with Union Gap, The Pacemakers, The Swinging Blue Jeans, Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations) PLUS The All Stars and guest compere Ray Martin. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to late Sunday and FREE DRINKS every night, this is going to be a fab weekend.

Save £40 per couple
Half Price Drinks
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - club upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

Top 60s Bands in Leicestershire

4* Hinckley Island Hotel

12 May & 7 July, 2017 • Quote: HK5/7-KOS

2 nights half board
was ~~£159~~pp
Sale £139pp

Come with us on a trip down memory lane for some super 60s music hits and a friendly party atmosphere at this 4-star hotel in the heart of the Leicestershire countryside, near Nuneaton and Market Bosworth. On 12 May enjoy music from 60s bands The Ivy League and The Swinging Blue Jeans; and on 7 July The Fortunes and The Cufflinks. These party breaks are for over-40s only.

INCLUDED: 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV, tea/coffee tray and free wifi • 2 breakfasts & 2 dinners • Live entertainment both nights • Free parking

Sounds of the 60s Summer Seaside Party

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

Friday, 7 July, 2017 • Quote: PA7-KOS

3 nights half board PLUS £149pp

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for our exclusive, private summer 60s Party Weekend - for over 40s only. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring The Ivy League, Hermans Hermits, Vanity Fare, Steve Ellis's Love Affair, plus The Beached Boys. With non-stop fun from Friday evening to late on Sunday and HALF PRICE DRINKS, this is one party weekend you're sure to love.

Half Price Drinks
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

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Motown & Soul in Surrey

Thatcher's Hotel, Guildford

24 June • Quote: TG6-KOS

2 nights half board
was ~~£149~~pp
Sale £129pp

ENJOY a fun-packed party break at this charming Tudor-style hotel set in beautifully manicured gardens near Guildford, close to The Hogs Back Brewery, and Polesden Lacey, a National Trust Edwardian country house and estate. The weekend entertainment programme features Motown & Soul music with Gee Bello & Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations).

INCLUDED: Entertainment both nights • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV, tea/coffee tray and free wifi • Free parking

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

IMPROVED: New Vauxhall flagship is even smarter and classier than its multiple award-winning predecessor, yet boasts more space than before

Sharper Insignia builds up Vauxhall's reputation

IT was a good looking and deserving European Car of the Year in 2009, but the Vauxhall Insignia was never the best drive in its class.

Its wide-tracked Insignia Grand Sport successor (from £17,115) rides and handles with verve and poise though, with even better looks inside and out.

But don't get carried away by the extravagant 'Grand Sport' suffix; it's not truly sporty yet, though a quick version is almost certainly planned.

The four-door coupé design has class-leading aerodynamics, yet the interior is a spacious marvel; Mark Adams, the six feet four head of the British-led design team, was filmed sliding into the rear seats to show just how much clearance even he has.

Legroom, a bugbear in the old car, has also increased by 2.5cm thanks to a longer wheelbase, while boot space has risen too.

The car is also 175 kilos lighter – more than the weight of two average male adult passengers - further boosting economy and handling.

The Grand Sport is certainly responsive and, with one of the best head-up displays available, the new 'like daylight' Intellilux smart LED headlight system, plus good seating, it's an easy car to get comfortable with.

And Vauxhall has also noted that not everyone wants to scroll through the touchscreen, so there are hard keys for major functions.

Engines range from 109-256bhp and diesel is expected to dominate due to corporate sales, but Vauxhall may yet trump sector revivals with an all-new 1.5-litre petrol turbo: it's light, refined, responsive and economical, arriving just as diesel's eco reputation is faltering.

A regular UK Top 10 seller, the Insignia was less popular across Europe, but development of a replacement was not hard to justify as this fine-looking car will also appear as a Buick in American markets and a Holden in Australasia.

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KENT LIFE

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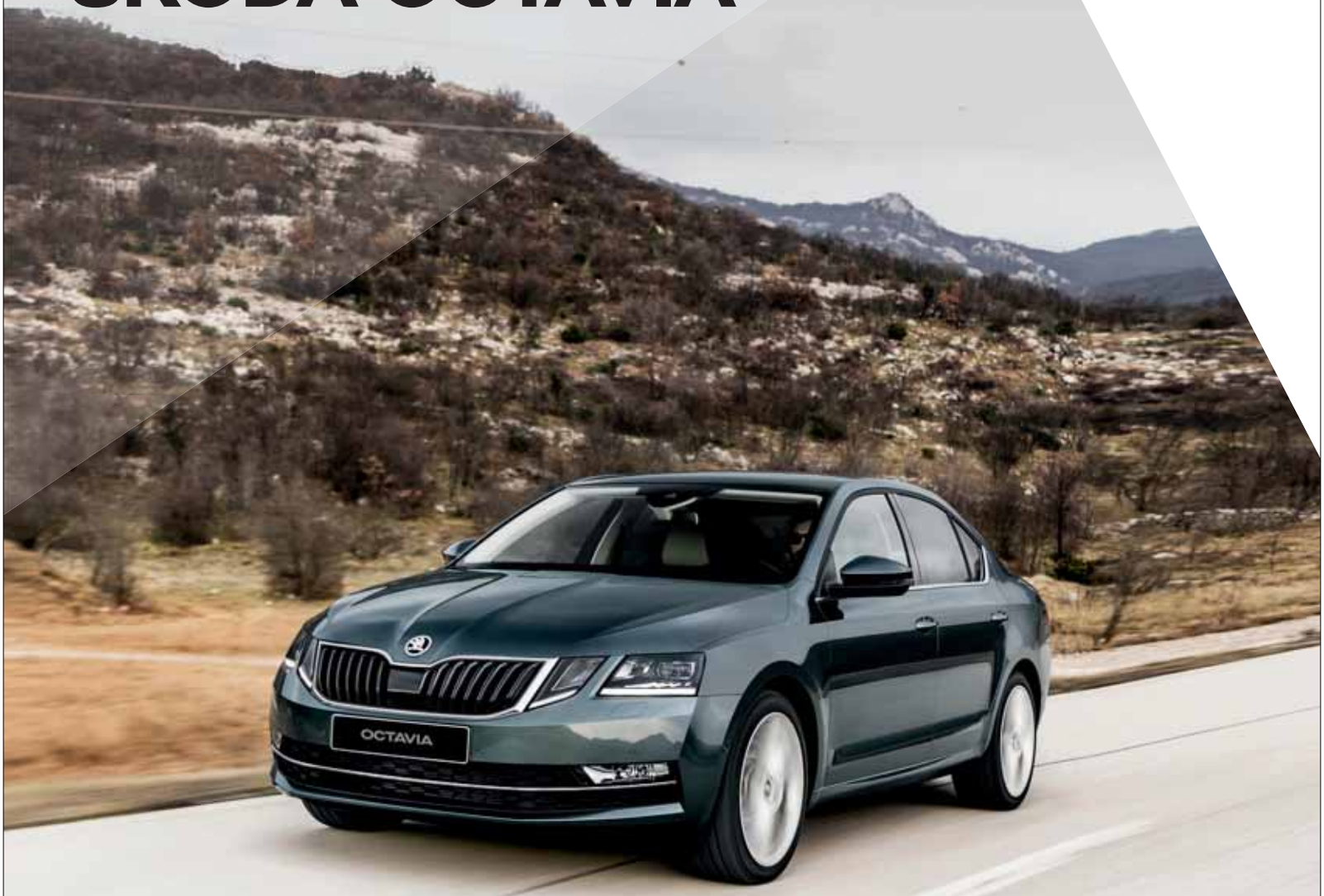

DRIVEN BY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The new ŠKODA Octavia starts from just £17,195. Book a test-drive today.

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0843 658 2618
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Motorline ŠKODA Canterbury
Broad Oak Road, Canterbury CT2 7PX
0843 658 2604
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Motorline ŠKODA Medway
26 Hoath Lane, Wigmore, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0SW
0843 658 9764
www.motorline.co.uk/skoda

Model shown is ŠKODA Octavia SE L 1.4 TSI Manual at £21,565 OTR with optional metallic paint at £555 and electric sunroof at £850.

Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Octavia range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 33.6 (8.4) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 51.4 (5.5) to 88.3 (3.2); Combined 43.5 (6.5) to 80.7 (3.5). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA Octavia range are 147 to 90 g/km. Standard EU test figures are for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Skoda strengthens backbone favourite

Steve Loader takes off on a road trip to run the rule over brand's star model after it gets a well-judged facelift to make it even easier to live with over high mileages

SKODA Octavia owners cover above average mileages apparently, so the Czech brand sent the media off on a two-day 400-mile road trip from Oxfordshire to the west coast of Wales.

Did I mind? No. The Octavia is a car for all reasons and seasons, so a mix of A and B-roads, plus motorways was covered with ease.

The model is Skoda UK's backbone accounting for nearly 29 per cent of all its volume in 2016, with 23,068 sales, edging up two per cent on 2015, and now likely to go even higher after a facelift in March.

The car (from £17,195) looks sleeker this time, with a new split headlamp arrangement - all-LED headlights and adaptive front headlights are now offered. This layout merges into a wider grille, creating a fashionable winged look.

Other highlights include upgraded cabin comfort, though the current Octavia – launched in 2013 – always felt well-appointed and robust inside, and generous on space, rear legroom being excellent for a car that can compete with the bigger Ford Mondeo/Vauxhall Insignia sector.

A redesigned centre console incorporates new infotainment systems and adding wi-fi hotspot and super-fast data transfer options.

This latter feature hints at the Octavia's high penetration in the business market, where diesel is still king, but it was petrol turbo examples that impressed most on our road trip.

Private buyers would like the 148bhp 1.4TSI spotlighted here – 0-62mph in 8.1 seconds and 54.3mpg (combined) – delivering excellent composure and handling thanks to a light yet powerful engine.

But the real surprise was the 113bhp 1.0-litre petrol turbo and six-speed manual gearbox, introduced last year: light and compact at just 78 kilos – less than the weight of the average British adult male – it disguises its three-cylinder layout well to provide an excellent driving experience offering 0-62mph in 9.9 seconds and 58.9mpg (combined).

Skoda admits the 1.0 might lack puff for those who regularly load the car – especially an estate – but it's hard to be unimpressed by a vehicle that delivers much the same grunt as one with twice the cubic capacity 25 years ago. Talking of capacity, the Octavia's load space remains unchanged and still shames many large cars.

A special SE Tech trim level is geared to business users, but most private buyers are expected to go for the upper mid-range SE L specification (from £21,350).

While this excludes that impressive 1.0-litre powertrain option, it does bring such highlights as leather seats, full LED and adaptive front headlights and privacy glass.

Skoda Octavia 1.4TSI SE 5-dr

Price:	from £19,530
Driving appeal:	★★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Ford Focus

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Motability

*2017 C-HR Icon 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £595 Advance Payment. Model shown is C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £1,795 Advance Payment, AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift at Nil Advance Payment, Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual at £95 Advance Payment, Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual at £895 Advance Payment and Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual at £295 Advance Payment. Subject to availability. Please note that a total of 60,000 miles over three years are allowed on the Motability Contract Hire Scheme. Offer valid between 1st April and 30th June 2017. Available as part of the Motability Contract Hire Scheme.

C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO_2 Emissions 135g/km. AYGO x-press 5 door 1.0 VVT-i x-shift. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 56.5 (5.0), Extra Urban 78.5 (3.6), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO_2 Emissions 95g/km. Auris Icon 5 door 1.6 D-4D Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 74.3 (3.8), Combined 65.7 (3.8). CO_2 Emissions 110g/km. Auris Touring Sports Icon 5 door 1.2T VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 58.9 (4.8). CO_2 Emissions 112g/km. Verso Icon 7-Seat 1.6 V-matic Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 53.3 (5.3), Extra Urban 68.9 (4.1), Combined 62.8 (4.5). CO_2 Emissions 119g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

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National Milk Records plc is looking for enthusiastic people to become **part-time, self-employed** Milk Recorders, visiting dairy farms in East Kent. The work involves taking individual cow milk samples during milkings and updating herd records onto a laptop.

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Please contact: lindseyd@nmr.co.uk for more details.
Closing date: 1/05/2017

PLANNING

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Slicker Recycling Ltd of Barracks Road, Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport DY13 9RW is applying for a licence to use Husk Commercial Vehicle services, The Freight Terminal, Lyden Hill, Dover CT15 7JN as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicle and 0 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

SET UP A JOB ALERT TODAY

Look local with jobs24.co.uk

LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

RE: ALAN SHUTTLEWORTH (deceased)

This notice is being posted by the executors of Mr Alan Shuttleworth (deceased) late of 20, Mayfair Avenue, Maidstone, Kent and also of 2, Crittenden Cottages, Gailants Lane, Maidstone, Kent, and latterly of 84, Knight Crescent, Middleton in Manchester.

Alan Shuttleworth was a former member and Troop Leader of the 25th Lanarkshire (6th Motherwell) Boy Scouts and of 'T Troop' Loose Swiss Scout Group.

PURSUANT to the Trustee Act 1925 section 27 NOTICE IS GIVEN to all creditors and others having any claims against or claiming to be beneficially interested in the estate of ALAN SHUTTLEWORTH.

ALAN SHUTTLEWORTH died on the 10th February 2014 and his will was proved in the District Registry of the High Court by the executors named within it.

All creditors and others having any claims against or claiming to be beneficially interested on the estate of ALAN SHUTTLEWORTH are required to send particulars of their claim in writing to the undersigned solicitors, Stephensons Solicitors LLP, whose address is 1st Floor, Sefton House, Northgate Close, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 6PQ (Reference AJG/S73475.3). All correspondence should be marked for the attention of Mr A Gregory and should be sent to those solicitors within a three month period after the date of this advertisement. If no further claims against the estate are intimated within the specified period of 3 months from the date of the advertisement the Executors will proceed to distribute the assets of the deceased among the persons entitled to them having regard only to the claims of which they have notice and shall not be liable for the assets of the deceased or any part of them so distributed to any person or persons of whose claims or demands they have not had notice of.

LICENSING ACT 2003: Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Timothy Ernest Watters and Barbara Marie Watters have applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence to operate the following Regulated Activities: Films, Live and Recorded Music (all indoors), Indoor Sporting Events, Supply of Alcohol (on and off the premises) from 09:00 to 24:00hrs Sunday to Thursday and 09:00 to 01:00hrs Friday and Saturday; Late Night Refreshment from 23:00 to 00:30 hrs Sunday to Thursday and 23:00 to 01:30hrs Friday and Saturday, all at the following premises: Blue Oyster, 82 Middle Wall, Whitstable CT5 1BN. A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday. Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 16/05/2017. The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that their identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

It Pays To Advertise

Hawkins cruises into next round

The Ditton potter comfortably overcame Tom Ford this week

Snooker

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

KENT'S Barry Hawkins admitted he was as surprised as anyone to ease through to the second round of the Betfred World Championships, where a tie with Scot Graeme Dott awaits this Sunday.

The Ditton potter led Tom Ford 7-2 after the first session and, despite losing the first frame on Thursday, compounded his advantage to romp to a 10-3 finishing score.

In truth, the damage had already been done on the first day by Hawkins, who trailed 2-1 before the Crucible got the better of Ford – who has still not made it past the first round.

But Hawkins was far from complaining, and is now set to face 2006 champion Dott for a place in the last eight in Sheffield – though the world number seven admitted he had some sympathy for Ford after going through a similar run earlier in his career.

"I'm delighted to get through, the first round is always a banana skin and I was expecting a closer game than that because I know how well Tom plays," he said.

"The Crucible does funny things to people and I think it got to him on the first day when I got in front and I broke the back of the match.

"I know what it's like to have a tough record here, you just want to come here, win a game and feel part of the tournament."

The class of opponent only ramps up for Hawkins from here though, with a three-time finalist in Dott - who upset the applecart by knocking out Ali Carter - standing in his way of the last eight.

But Hawkins insists he is not one of those blind to his opponent's ability, knowing he has to be on top form if he is to reach his fifth quarter-final in succession.

"Graeme has had three finals and won one and he's someone who seems to thrive at this place," he added.

"He played very well to beat Ali Carter and I'll have to play very well to beat him, so I'm really looking forward to it."

Watch the Snooker World Championship Live on Eurosport and Eurosport Player, with Colin Murray and analysis from Jimmy White and Neal Foulds.

TRIUMPHANT: Barry Hawkins at Sheffield's The Crucible after romping to a comfortable first round win in the World Championships. Pictures: PA WIRE

'Peter Pan of cricket' showered with praise

Cricket

THE decision to sign Darren Stevens up for a one-year contract extension over the winter is looking an inspired one.

Towards the tail end of last year the Leicestershire-born player agreed terms for a 13th summer in Canterbury – a season which has begun with back-to-back championship wins inspired by runs and wickets for Stevens.

In the past fortnight the veteran all-rounder, who turns 41 on April 30, has been described as the 'Peter Pan of cricket' and likened to Benjamin Button – the quirky film character played by Brad Pitt who ages in reverse – this after Stevens scored 50s in three of his first four knocks and picked up 13 wickets, including two five-for returns in as many starts.

VETERAN: Darren Stevens

Derbyshire, this week's visitors to Canterbury, are the next county to appear on the radar of Stevens who, according to Ben Brown, the Sussex wicketkeeper-batsman, shows no signs of slowing down.

"Darren is a very skilful bowler, and one who's been around for years," said Brown.

"He still hurts you with the bat, as he always has, but these days he's equally adept with the ball. We're talking about a very good all-round cricketer who knows his game inside out. Kent played well down here. Their seamers just wouldn't go away.

"They hit the wicket hard and kept coming at you and Darren was the one who did the most damage against us. He's may be not as quick as the others, but he bowls so few bad balls. There's just no let up."

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

FA rule Gills star Dack out of final day clash

GILLINGHAM star Bradley Dack has been ruled out for the remainder of the season in the club's battle against relegation from League One.

Going into the weekend, Ady Pennock's side were four points from safety with two games left to play, but the task of securing survival has been made more difficult after Dack was slapped with an additional ban following a red card against MK Dons earlier this month.

The 23-year-old, has already served a two-match suspension following the dismissal on April 1, but upon receipt of referee Carl Boyeson's match report from that game, the sport's governing body have handed Dack an increased ban that is effective immediately.

The club's appeal against this was rejected.

It meant he missed Saturday's clash with Fleetwood Town on Saturday and will also sit out the final game of the season next Sunday when the Gills travel to Northampton Town.

FRUSTRATED: Bradley Dack

CELEBRATION: Luke Mossey was victorious

Shakey crashes out in dramatic Brands race

KENT'S Shane 'Shakey' Byrne crashed out as he was beaten in the British Superbike Championship at Brands Hatch over the Easter weekend by Luke Mossey, who claimed a double victory.

Byrne was restricted to fourth place in the first race, behind Mossey, Leon Haslam and Christian Iddon but the drama unquestionably came in the second contest at the West Kingsdown circuit.

A pack of four at the front were being closed by Byrne and he made a move on Haslam to move into third, but both the defending champion and teammate Glenn Irwin crashed out unhurt at Clearways within just laps of each other.

A double podium means Mossey retained his position at the top of the standings, well ahead of Byrne.

Stevenson makes Crabble return

DOVER Athletic have recalled Jim Stevenson from a loan spell at fellow National League side Southport.

The midfielder, who joined Whites from Aldershot last summer, played 10 times, scoring once, for Port since making the move north In February.

The 24-year-old last featured for boss Chris Kinnear's side in the Kent Senior Trophy win against VCD Athletic at Crabble on February 6, with his last league appearance coming as a substitute against Macclesfield Town on January 10.

Dover have made the decision to strengthen their squad as the league campaign reaches its climax, with the Whites facing Macclesfield at home on Tuesday before a trip to Barrow next Saturday.

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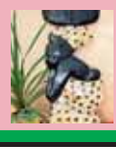
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